WHY SOCIALISM ?

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FOREWORD

This book is not intended to explain socialist theory. It has been written with a view to elucidate certain problems arising out of the present stage of the national movement and the problem of its future direction. The growth of the Congress Socialist Party has created a thought-ferment within the ranks of the Congress and has brought issues of fundamental importance to the fore. A conflict of ideologies, a juxtaposition of programmes, demands clear-cut decisions. It is to help Congressmen, especially the Congress worker, to make these decisions, that this little attempt has been made. It is addressed primarily to the Congress worker.

I am aware of the many shortcomings of this book. The requirement of presenting rather technical ideas in an easily intelligible form, has led me to over-simplification. Many of the statements in the book have to be refined, qualified and hedged in to answer to strict accuracy. But I thought it to be more desirable to convey the central truth in a direct manner than to confuse the reader with a lot of intricate thought-chopping. As it is, I am afraid I have not been able to avoid technical language and express myself as simply as I should have liked to. While in preparation, I discussed certain passages in the book with some Congress friends; so I am only too well aware of my failure in this direction.

On the other hand, the book will probably appear annoyingly elementary to the *pandits* of Socialism.

There is such a gulf between the thinking of the socialist and the average Congress worker, that what is a truism to the one has to be arrived at by the other through an arduous process of reasoning. It is natural, therefore, that what is written for the one, should appear elementary to the other. I, however, invite my socialist friends to offer their criticisms, so that the problems I have tried to descuss, might be further elucidated by collective discussion.

A few words regarding the arrangement of the book. I have tried in Chapter I to lay bare the essential foundation of Socialism I have noticed that in discussions on Socialism, there is always a tendency to get lost in details and ignore its central point—the elimination of private ownership of means of production in favour of social ownership.

In Chapter II, I have tried, in the light of the basic theory of Socialism, to explain the items of the Programme of the Congress Socialist Party.

Chapter III seeks to analyse certain alternatives that have been suggested to Socialism in India. Particular attention has been given to Gandhiji's ideas and to Dr. Bhagavan Das' ancient scientific Socialism.

In Chapter IV, I have attempted to discuss tactics of the anti-imperialist movement and their relation to Socialism and our Party. I have left out a number of rather important questions concerning the last, because of their rather technical nature. They are of little impor-

tance to the general reader or even the Congress worker. They concern largely members of the Party itself and so are best discussed in the Party's own manifestoes and theses.

Finally, I wish to offer my grateful thanks to Mr. Sri Prakasa, who, in a busy life, was good enough to see through the proofs of the book and help me with a number of valuable suggestions.

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

CHAPTER I

THE FOUNDATION OF SOCIALISM

"I am persuaded that till property is taken away there can be no equitable or just distribution of things, nor can the world be happily governed."

Thomas More

Schools of Socialism

It is often remarked, and not always by the uninformed, that there are so many types of Socialism that it is difficult to tell what is meant by the term.

It is true that there have been, historically, different schools of Socialism and mutually conflicting socialist parties. But, I think it would not be wrong to say that in recent years, especially owing to the impact of the World Crisis and the rise of Fascism, there has been a growing unity in socialist thought; and today more than ever before it is possible to say that there is only one type, one theory of Socialism — Marxism.

It should be remembered, moreover, that the greater part of the differences between various groups of socialists was, and is, based not on the nature and definition of Socialism, but on the method and tactics of changing the present capitalist society into a socialist one. So far

only communists have vindicated their theory of tactics by their great and remarkable success in Russia. The proponents of the other methods are today everywhere in the trough of failure.

I am not concerned here with questions of tactics. My object is simply to explain the basic principle of Socialism, the domain of which is too extensive to be covered in a short chapter of a book of this nature. I shall be satisfied if I am able to impress on the reader's mind, just the principle on which, as a foundation, the edifice of Socialism must be raised.

Socialism: A System of Social Organization

The first thing to remember about Socialism is that it is a system of social reconstruction. It is not a code of personal conduct; it is not something which you and I can practise. Nor is it a hot-house growth. When we speak of applying Socialism to India, we mean the reorganisation of the whole economic and social life of the country: its farms, factories, schools, theatres. No doubt, it is possible to run the life of a single village or the business of a single factory on socialist lines. But, that would not be Socialism. The picture cast by a prism on the laboratory wall has seven colours, but it is not the rainbow of the skies.

State Power Necessary for Socialist Reconstruction

It follows, therefore, that those who desire to construct a socialist society should have the power and the requisite sanction behind them to do so. No group of

idealists can build up Socialism unless it has power in its hands.

What is meant by power ? If one looks at the world of today, one finds that the instrument through which groups, parties, individuals attempt to enforce their plans, their schemes, over the Community, the Nation, is the *State*. Whether it is a constitutionalist party, like the Labour Party of England, a revolutionary party, like the Bolshevik Party of Russia, a fascist party like that of Hitler in Germany, it seeks in every case to *capture the State*. When the State is in your hands, you can legislate, you can use the whole magnificent apparatus of propaganda and education that modern science has made available; you can enforce your will. And, if there is resistance, you can use the coercive arm of the State—the police and the army — to crush it. Behind every piece of legislation lies the State's power to persuade and, ultimately, to coerce.

No party in the world of today can build up Socialism unless it has the machinery of the State in its hands: whether it has come to acquire it through the will of the electorate or by a *coup d'etat* is irrelevant to our discussion just now.

As a corollary to this, we can state another proposition: A party in power, i. e., in possession of the State, can always establish Socialism, provided it has either of two things: sufficient powers of coercion to put down resistance or sufficient popular support to be able to deal with opposition. Both in the end mean the same thing.

The coercive powers of a socialist State, if they exist at all, are bound to be derived from popular support — the "unpopular" support, that is, the support of the classes of property, being rather thrown on the opposite side.

I have said that a party in possession of the State and with the means to keep itself there, can, if it so desired, create a socialist heaven on the Earth. What must it exactly do to begin doing this ? Must it haul up all the "exploiters" and pot-bellied capitalists and have them shot ? Must Pandit Jawaharlal, supposing he became the Premier or President of Socialist India, line up the Taluqdars of the U. P. and have them blown up to bits ? Must he seize the treasures of the *rajas* and the *mahajans* and distribute them to the people — equally, of course ? Must he turn over the Tata Iron Works, for instance, to the workers employed there, and leave them to make as good or bad a business of it as they please ? Must he split up all the land in the country, divide the total acreage by the total population, and hand over a little plot to each individual ? Will that be Socialism ?

No. Socialism is something more sensible, more scientific, more civilized than all that.

What, then, must Pandit Jawaharlal do ?

We can find the answer to this question, if we take a look at the society we live in — here and abroad.

INEQUALITY: THE CENTRAL PROBLEM OF SOCIETY

The first thing that strikes us is the strange and painful fact of inequalities — inequality of rank, of

culture, of opportunity: a most disconcertingly unequal distribution of the good things of life. Poverty, hunger, filth, disease, ignorance — for the overwhelming many. Comfort, luxury, culture, position, power — for the select few. In *our* country as much as anywhere else; perhaps more here than elsewhere. Where, indeed, will you find such contrasts of wealth and poverty, of despotism and degradation as in unhappy India ?

This fact of inequalities, with all its brood of social consequences, is the central problem of our society. It is to the solution of this problem that have been directed the best efforts of the best of men in all ages, in our age more than in any other. Charity, philanthropy, utopias, appeals to the more fortunate to be kind to the less fortunate, denunciation of the rich and exaltation of poverty, curtailment of wants — these have been the common reactions to this evil of inequalities.

The socialist's reaction is very different from these. His approach to this problem is like that of the physician to disease. He seeks to discover the root cause of the malady. He does not take the fact of inequalities for granted and then proceed to level them up. He endeavours rather to tackle the problem at the source so as to check the very *growth* of inequalities.

Biological Inequality

In tracing the source of this evil, the socialist first of all encounters the biologist. He is told that human beings are not born equal, as the democrat loves to repeat,

but very much unequal. From birth we are said to differ in innate capacity—both in quantity and quality. This of course is true and undeniable. Even a behaviourist will have no difficulty in admitting the biologist's claim.

But let us see how this fact of biological inequalities affects the socialist's examination of social inequalities. He admits that the normal bell-shaped curve of probabilities applies as much to human abilities as to any other phenomenon. In society there is at one end a small group of geniuses and at the other an equally small group of half-wits and idiots, while in the centre is the vast majority of humanity with more or less equal capabilities.

These biological differences appear in numerous social forms. We get, for examble, inequalities in learning and achievements in the arts and sciences. Then, we have inequalities of rank, of wealth, of power, of opportunity. Now, the socialist's protest never was against the fact that Tagores and Ramans exist in society. If anything, he is glad that they do exist. He regrets, however, that hundreds of potential Tagores and Ramans go unknown to the grave owing to the fact that they are denied opportunities for self-development. The evil of inequalities was never said to lie, either by socialists or others, in the fact that only a few are gifted by Nature to become great poets and scientists. The socialists' plea is that the evil lies in the inequalities of the second set enumerated above, viz., inequalities of rank, wealth, etc. In our modern world, where property has become a universal social sanction, it is the unequal distribution of property that is the core of the social problem.

Inequality of Wealth not due to Biological Inequality

Wherefore, then, this unequal distribution of wealth? It may be suggested that here too biology does the trick. The clever ones among us make better business men and therefore grow richer than the others. Supposing we grant this for the moment; does it explain the wealth of those who came to acquire it by inheritance ? In the case of inherited wealth, it is obvious, of course, that biological qualities play no part at all. The idiotic heir of a millionaire would just as well inherit the millions of his ancestor as he would if he were a genius. Here it is obvious that it is merely the existence of a social standard, custom, that is responsible for the fortunes of heirs. Change that custom, and millions of people who are wealthy today would suddenly grow poor.

But let us take the case of those who have made their own fortunes. Have they not done so because of their superior ability ?

That to be a successful business man a certain type and degree of ability is required, cannot be denied. But, would it not be rather strange that divine dispensation should have ordained that only one type of human ability should be productive of wealth, while all others should acquire wealth only at the will of the wealthy ? A great mathematician may be the greatest of his time but his researches, while they bring him immortality perhaps, do not in themselves mean wealth for him. Has not his genius even as much value as that of an

ordinary business man who makes money by following certain set rules of the game ? A scientist, no matter how clever, does not make any money from his laboratory, unless, of course, he turns a business man. The business man's laboratory alone seems to be productive of wealth.

Let us see what this laboratory is and how wealth is created and accumulated.

Production and Accumulation of Wealth

In the world we have men on one side and Nature on the other. All wealth is in the womb of Nature. Man must work upon Nature in order to appropriate from it what he wants. All things of use which he does appropriate constitute his wealth. Thus, the source of wealth is Nature and the agency which creates it, is human labour. This is the rock bottom of all economics.

How does wealth accumulate ? It is obvious that if men appropriated from Nature just as much as was required for their bare existence, nothing would be left for accumulation. The amount of wealth that man can extract from Nature depends upon his productive power, i. e., the nature of his tools and his methods of work. *For accumulation to be physically possible, therefore, the productive powers of man should be so advanced that he may be able to produce more than he needs for his subsistence.* This is the fundamental basis of accumulation. When the arts of hunting, fishing, planting have advanced enough to yield more than is necessary for the lowest existence, accumulation becomes *possible.*

Now, in a society in which the arts of production have advanced beyond the subsistence level, each member would be *able* to accumulate a certain amount of wealth, *provided* he was free to work for himself, owned his own tools, had free access to Nature and was able to keep all he produced for himself. The maximum rate of accumulation would depend upon the difference between maximum individual production and minimum individual consumption. It might very well happen that some families instead of consuming the minimum used up all they produced. These will not be able to accumulate any thing. They, however, will not starve, because we have assumed that the stage of production has not only reached but passed the subsistence level.

In this society there may also be some others who are exceptionally intelligent. They may naturally produce a little more than the rest and, if they are thrifty too, they might save comparatively more. On the other hand, people of inferior intelligence might save very little or nothing at all. But, in every case, in such a society, every able-bodied person would be able to accumulate wealth or, at least, support himself, if, to repeat the provisos stated above, he is free to work for himself, owns his tools, has free access to Nature and is the master of all that he produces.

Let us turn from this hypothetical society to our own. We find that the methods of production — both agricultural and industrial — are so advanced that a man can easily produce much more than he can consume, even at the present standard of living, which is naturally higher than

the primitive stage of our hypothetical society. The Indian cultivator, in spite of his comparatively old-fashioned methods and tools, can produce much more than is necessary for him to live on. Yet, we find that millions of our people do not get even a square meal a day. At the same time we also find that there are many people who have not only got their wants satisfied, but who are also enjoying a high degree of comfort. How have these conditions of dire want on one side and ease and luxury on the other been created?

Let us take the case of the poor first. Considering the advanced productive powers of our present society, it should have been possible for every Indian not only to support himself but also to accumulate something. But, as a matter of fact, most Indians are not supporting themselves. Why? Because, the provisos which were mentioned above have nearly all disappeared. *The people do not all work for themselves; they have no longer free access to Nature; in many cases they are not the masters of their tools; they are not able to keep all they produce for themselves.* How all this has come about would be too long a story to tell. That the fact is true, all of us can see.

The poverty of our people, then, is due to the fact that the means of production, i.e., tools, materials, land, etc., are no longer in their hands. They have to pay for most of them, and the more they pay for them the less their own share of the produce and the greater their poverty. A large proportion of them has not even the means to pay for them: there is nothing that they

can do except to sell their labour to others. If the means of production were freely available to each individual, there would be no poverty, unless the population rose to such an extent that at the present stage of the productive powers the means of production were unable to produce sufficient wealth to meet the needs of the people. This certainly is not the case in India yet, in spite of its large population.

Now, let us take the case of the rich. How is it that some have come to acquire thousands and lakhs of times as much wealth as the poor? An individual, no matter how clever, cannot possibly produce, at any stage of productivity, thousands of times more than others who are using the same means of production. The great riches of the rich are not obviously of their own production. It is impossible for such disproportion in the productivity of men, living in the same society, to exist. We have pointed out above that there is no other way of creating wealth except by working upon Nature, and that the only way of accumulating wealth is by producing more than one consumes. The limits to production are set by the stage of development the arts of production have reached in society. This is true even in the complicated societies of the West, where production is so mechanized. There we find, as we do here too though not to the same extent, that the means of production, particularly of industrial production, have developed so much that they cannot be used any more by individuals working independently. But, this in no way invalidates my argument. If all the people participating

in production took their share of what they produced, the situation would still be the same as in our hypothetical society. Each member of society would accumulate a fair amount of wealth and there would be no poverty nor concentration of too much wealth in a few hands.

How then, have the great fortunes of present society been made ? It may be urged that they are the result of patient saving by industrious people. The answer is that thrift and industry have not been known to travel for generations in the same family line, nor in themselves have they been found to result in excessive wealth. None of the fortunes of today, especially those founded on industry, has a hoary ancestry. The secret of wealth does not lie in the peculiar talents or blood of the wealthy.

Wealth Based on Exploitation

Our analysis of the process of accumulation furnishes the secret. Suppose that in a society in which production has passed the subsistence level, an individual manages to employ, say, ten other individuals to work for him and pays them only what they require for their subsistence and keeps the surplus for himself. That individual would be accumulating wealth ten times as fast as others who are working for themselves; and he would soon become a very wealthy man. It should be obvious that the volume of his private wealth would increase with the number of individuals he employs.

Suppose again that in the same society another individual came somehow to establish a monopoly over Nature, say, land. By virtue of that monopoly he does

not allow anyone to work upon that land, i. e., to cultivate it, unless a share of the produce is vouchsafed him. He too will begin to grow richer than the rest, and his riches will grow in proportion to the land he "owns" and the tribute he exacts from those who till his land. Likewise with other natural resources.

This is the true secret of the inequality of wealth and the true meaning of *exploitation.*

The question may be asked here, why should any individual work for any one else and be thus cheated out of part of his produce when he could easily work for himself and keep the whole of it to himself ? A full treatment of this question will involve a survey of the entire social and political history of mankind. Briefly, the answer is that there is no reason why any one should do it and that, as a matter of fact, in history no one has done it except under compulsion.

In all human societies where the open frontier existed so that any one could clear the jungle and cultivate his own plot, no one worked for another, except for mutual benefit. The gifts of Nature, however, were the first to become the monopoly of the few. This monopoly in the earliest days was based on sheer and naked force. A group of people arose practically everywhere who established an exclusive ownership over Nature, particularly over land, and subjugated others to slavery, serfdom, or to the status of just "free" rent-payers.

In industry, as long as the latter remained at a level where independent individual production was possible,

industrial exploitation and, therefore differences in industrial incomes, were slow to arise. As, however, production advanced and cities grew, slaves or even individual craftsmen were made to work together for a master, thus creating inequalities in industrial incomes also. The real and rapid growth of industrial fortunes dates, however, from the time steam power (the Industrial Revolution) came into being, making possible a much larger employment, i. e., *exploitation,* of workers.

It may be urged that there are in society classes of men who neither employ labour nor receive rent or any other tribute, but who nevertheless are quite rich—richer in some cases than the men of the other two classes. For instance, there are traders, speculators, bankers, etc. These neither produce wealth themselves nor do they directly exploit the labour of others engaged in producing wealth. Whatever may be the immediate source of the wealth of these classes, this much at least should be clear that it too must come somehow from the total wealth created in the Community.

Wealth, as we showed, is created by labour and except that portion of it which goes to the producers, it becomes the property of the employing and exploiting classes. But these classes naturally cannot use themselves all the things that their workers have created. These must be sold and other things bought. Thus, traders and speculators come into being and because goods must be sold in order to enable the manufacturers to buy materials for further manufacture and sale, the latter yield, both as buyers and sellers, some part of the

surplus wealth that has fallen into their hands to the traders and speculators. Likewise with bankers. They are said to earn interest on the money they lend. But the interest is created in the process of manufacture and is paid out of the same fund of surplus wealth. Profits, interests, middlemen's commissions,—all these come from the same common fund: the fund created by the surplus wealth appropriated by manufacturers and those who possess a monopoly in the means of production. Money in itself cannot make money, nor can any sort of financial and commercial manipulation do so. The whole game of capitalist business consists in the attempt of the various parts of it to appropriate as large a share of the surplus wealth as possible. Herein lies the secret of all capitalist competition and all the subtle and complicated business practices that are so laboriously taught in the universities !

To repeat, for it will bear repetition, it is the wealth that accumulates in the hands of those who own the means of production, by virtue of their exploitation of others' labour, that constitutes the general fund from which, as a result of the working of the economic organization, other groups draw their share. It is wrong to believe that these "middlemen" in any manner "create" wealth. Their "money-making" merely means diverting as great a share of the total accumulated wealth as possible in their own direction. Even the professions, lawyers, physicians, etc., fill their ladles from this same common bowl, though in their case, part of their share comes from that portion of the total wealth

also that goes to the actual producers—the workers, peasants, etc.

To sum up. The root cause of inequalities of wealth lies in the fact that the gifts of Nature, which yield wealth to men, and the instruments of production, have come to be privately owned by people for their own benefit. This leads to economic exploitation, i. e , the withholding from the workers of all that they produce except what they need to live on at a given standard of living. This takes place either directly, as when labourers are employed to produce goods for the manufacturer, or indirectly, as when men rent land, or any other natural resource, for their livelihood.

The earliest manner in which these sources and instruments (collectively termed "means" in socialist writings) of production passed into private hands was through force. This is termed "primitive accumulation". The surplus wealth thus accumulated in the hands of those who were able to use force went on multiplying through the ages through the institution of slavery and indentured labour, till the loot from India and the inventions of certain German-Englishmen combined to usher in the Industrial Revolution. This became *par excellence* the age of exploitation, because it made the employment of unheard of masses of labourers in single manufactures possible.

Such being the causes of the present inequalities of wealth, it should not be difficult to imagine what form the socialist solution of this problem would take.

The Cure of Inequality

Theoretically speaking, two solutions are possible, each if practicable resulting in a just, equitable and happy society. The first solution is so to reconstitute society that every individual may be free to work for himself,—he may either cultivate his own land (without the payment of any tribute to anyone) or work with his own tools in his workshop. No one may be allowed to possess larger means of production than he can possibly make use of with his own hands.

It should be clear that in order to change the existing order into the one described above, very drastic changes will have to be made and great restrictions will have to be imposed. For such a society to work smoothly, a degree of social control and discipline would be required which one does not associate with societies whose economic organisation is so primitive. Such a society, moreover, cannot have railways and telegraphs — in fact, nothing but the most primitive forms of transport and communication. From a military standpoint such a society, exposed to the rapacity of highly industrialized countries, would be extremely weak and an easy prey to them. From the point of view of standard of living, the people, especially in India where there is such a large population, would have to live on an extremely low level, for *per capita* productivity would be very low.

In short, even if it were possible to adopt this solution as an escape from our present ills, it would be extremely inadvisable to do so for innumerable reasons.

It is not, however, possible to adopt this solution. Nothing short of a dictatorship would be required to carry it through. Such a drastic transformation of society, involving the destruction of all vested interests, would not be otherwise possible. For such a dictatorship of the small producer there is no social basis in society.

THE SOCIALIST SOLUTION

The socialist solution, as it ought to be clear from our analysis of the process of accumulation of wealth, is to *abolish private ownership of the means of production* and to *establish over them the ownership of the whole community.*

The abolition of private and establishment of social ownership over the means of production mean the eradication of economic exploitation, the ending of economic inequalities; in other words, the removal of the basic curse of present society. The source of accumulation of wealth in private hands is the exploitation of labour, as we saw above. With social ownership established, people no longer work for others. They work for themselves, not individually but collectively; and what they produce is not for the profit of the manufacturer, but for their own consumption. Social ownership means that all wealth is held in common and shared equitably, the basis of distribution being, initially, the amount and character of work done and, finally, the needs of the individual; only that part of the produce being withheld from distribution which is necessary for defence and administration, for

schools and hospitals, for economic development, and for other common purposes.

Here, then, is the basic principle of Socialism—socialization of the means of production. Any attempt at socialist reconstruction of society must start with the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production.

For a young State launching upon Socialism, it may not be possible to accomplish this at one stroke. However, if it is to succeed in its purpose, it must effect this change immediately in all those spheres of large-scale production which dominate the economic life of the country and hold the key positions.

In developed communities, side by side with the means of production, rise also means of exchange and distribution—banks, commercial institutions, transport, etc. The latter issue out of and support the former. Their purpose is to keep the wheels of production turning. Socialization of the former therefore must also be accompanied by socialization of the latter.

We are now perhaps in a position to say what Pandit Jawaharlal would do, if he came to power.

I shall try to show in the next chapter how the Congress Socialist Party proposes to apply these principles to India and what its concrete proposals are.

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY STANDS FOR

If an indigenous government took the place of the foreign government and kept all the vested interests in tact, that would not even be the shadow of freedom.

Jawaharlal Nehru

SOCIALISM AND INDIA

The objects of the Congress Socialist Party, as laid down in its Constitution, are "the achievement of complete independence, in the sense of separation from the British Empire, and the establishment of a socialist society."

This is direct and simple enough. The Party has two objects: The first is the same as that of the Indian National Congress, except that the Party wishes to make it clear that the complete independence of India must include separation from the British Empire.*

The second object of the Party simply means that Independent India must reorganise its economic life on a socialist basis.*

* Compare with these objects the following statement of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru: "India's immediate goal can therefore only be considered in terms of ending the exploitation of her

Why ?

The question at bottom is one of values and ultimate objectives, which once determined, the rest becomes a matter of logical sequence.

If the ultimate objective is to make the masses politically and economically free, to make them prosperous and happy, to free them from all manner of exploitation, to give them unfettered opportunity for dovelopment, then, Socialism becomes a goal to which one must irresistibly be drawn. If again, the objective is to take hold of the chaotic and conflicting forces of society and to fashion the latter according to the ideal of utmost social good and to harness all the conscious directives of human intelligence in the service of the commonweal, then, again, Socialism becomes an inescapable destination.

Those who have different aims and objectives need not trouble to read further.

If, then, these be our objectives, as I trust they are, it should take little argument, in view of what has been explained in the last Chapter, to show that Socialism is as definitely "indicated" in India as elsewhere. In India too there is poverty, nay, starvation, on the one hand and wealth and luxury on the other; in India too there is exploitation; the means of production here also

people. Politically, it must mean independence and the severance of the British connection, which means imperialist domination (our first object—J. P. N.); economically and socially it must mean the ending of all special class privileges and vested interests (our second object—J. P. N)—*Whither India.*

are in private hands. That is, the root evil of modern society, namely, economic and social inequality, exists in India too as does its cause: the exploitation of the great many by the very few.

And this is not the result of British rule. It is independent of it and would continue even after it. The ending of the foreign domination would not automatically solve India's problem of poverty; would not put a stop to the exploitation of the vast many; would not, in fact, mean the accomplishment of any of the objectives which we have started with.

Indian Culture Not Opposed To Socialism

It is often said that India's conditions are peculiar; that India's traditions are different; that India is industrially a backward country; and that, therefore, Socialism has no applicability here.

If by this it is meant that the basic principles of Socialism have no validity in India, it would be difficult to imagine a greater fallacy.

The laws by which wealth accumulates hold as true in India as elsewhere and the manner in which the accumulation can be stopped is the same here as anywhere else. The peculiarity of Indian conditions may influence and determine the manner and the stages in which the principles of Socialism may be applied here, but never alter those principles. If social ownership of the means of production is essential for stopping exploitation and

unequal distribution of wealth in other parts of the world, it is equally esential in India.

As for Indian traditions, as far as I know them, they are not averse to the sharing of life and its privileges. It is said that individualism has always been the dominant feature of Indian civilization and therefore the latter is opposed to Socialism. To put the problem in this manner is not to understand either of the ideals and to get lost in words. Individualism has been the prominent *motif* in our culture only in the sense that perfection of the individual has been its ideal; never in the sense of narrow, self-seeking individualism, which is the *motif* in capitalist society. And, if individual perfection is the goal, the socialist has not the least difficulty in showing that such perfection can come about only by aiming at the utmost common good. Does not Trotsky say somewhere that only in a socialist society can the average of humanity rise to the level of a Plato or a Marx ?

Finally, India's industrial backwardness need not discourage us. If anything, this backwardness would be helpful to us because it means a much weaker opposition. As for the practicability of applying Socialism to a region of industrial backwardness, it is enough to remind the reader of what the Russians are doing in some of the most backward parts of the globe. Socialism is being built up as surely in Uzbekistan as in Moscow. If there is a socialist party in power, with the requisite sanction behind it, it can build up Socialism anywhere in the world with the help of modern science.

It is for these reasons that the Party has set for itself the object of establishing a socialist society in India after independence has been won.

THE CONGRESS AND SOCIALISM

Now, what is the position of the Indian National Congress with regard to these questions ?

It would be wrong to suppose that the Congress is wholly unmindful of the problems we have discussed above and that its objectives do not go beyond national independence. The Congress, in fact, has recognised the twofold problem that faces it, and it has admitted, though grudgingly and vaguely, that the Indian masses must be freed as well from Imperialism as from the indigenous system of exploitation.

In a now little remembered resolution, the All India Congress Committee only in 1929, declared that:

> "In the opinion of this Committee, the great poverty and misery of the Indian people are due not only to foreign exploitation in India but also to the economic structure of society, which the alien rulers support so that their exploitation may continue. In order therefore to remove this poverty and misery and to ameliorate the condition of the Indian masses, it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure of society and to remove the gross inequalities."
> (Bombay, 1929).

Here are revolutionary changes in the economic structure of society demanded. And the reasons for demanding them have been as clearly set out as could be

done by a socialist. But, then, where is the rub ? Where is our difference with the Congress on this point ? The difference arises because the Congress after talking of "revolutionary changes" buries its head in the sand.

I ask Congressmen, who today oppose us and deride us, I ask them in all earnestness, if levying of death duties and a graduated income-tax; nationalization of key industries; reduction of rent; freedom from rent for uneconomic holdings;*—if these fall under the daring phrase, "revolutionary changes in the *economic structure of society*"; if these will put an end to that system of exploitation to which the above resolution makes so pointed a reference ? And, yet, this is all that the Karachi Resolution offers by way of basic economic policy.

I may be reminded that the A. I. C. C. is not the Congress. That would be an admirable piece of quibbling, but would hardly answer my question.

But, let us take the Karachi Resolution itself. The preamble to the resolution clearly declares that Swaraj in order to be a real Swaraj for the masses must mean not only the political freedom of the country but also the economic freedom of the masses.

What is economic freedom, pray ? Are my friends and leaders who oppose us to-day prepared to answer this question, and then honestly believe that economic freedom can be secured by passing the puny measures that the Karachi Resolution rather fearfully enumerates ?

*C.f. The Karachi resolution of the Congress on Fundamental Rights, etc.

If all that the Congress understands by economic freedom is death duties and national ownership of key industries, it will be a very fine freedom indeed that it will confer on this unfortunate land! We have known slavery so long that we have forgotten what freedom is!

I do not desire to suggest that at Karachi, the Congress should have outlined a full-grown programme of Socialism. Nor are we insisting that it should do so now. What it must do, however, is to accept such a minimum economic programme as will, when put to practice, free the masses from economic exploitation and transfer full political and economic power into their hands.

It is such a programme that the Congress Socialist Party is advocating.

The present programme of the Congress falls far short of these ideals. It might ameliorate the condition of the masses to a certain extent, but it will neither rid them of exploitation nor put them in power. Far from effecting revolutionary changes in it, as the A. I. C C. contemplated at Bombay, it leaves the economic structure of society in tact. It leaves capitalists, landlords and princes on the one side and workers, tenants and subjects on the other. It leaves the means of production in the hands of private individuals, except in the sphere of key industries. The entire economic organization, based as it is on the exploitation of the poor and middle classes, is preserved. This is not economic freedom The preamble and substance of the Karachi Resolution are at wide variance with each other. What we are endeavouring to

do is to remove this variance and bring them close together. When the Congress professes the economic freedom of the masses, let it distinctly state what that freedom means.

The Congress may be unprepared for the acceptance of such a minimum programme as we advocate; it may require time to grow to the proper ideological stature. But it is one thing to say that we are not ready for any further definition of our goal — which of course may be disputed — and quite another, as latterly repeated *ad nauseum*, that Socialism is moonshine; that it is unsuited to the Indian climate; that Indian socialists are merely adventuring in the realm of theory; that they are only quoting a rusty old German Jew who called himself Karl Heinrich Marx; and the rest of the drivel.

If Congressmen persist in repeating this nonsense, they must tell the people what *they* mean by economic freedom, by freedom of the masses from the native system of exploitation from which they are said to suffer as much as from British imperialism, and which is as much the cause of their poverty and misery as the latter.

As far as we socialists are concerned — and on this are agreed not only Congress Socialists, but all those in India who hold socialist or communist views — economic freedom means only one thing to us — *Socialism*. Without Socialism, economic freedom would be a sham, moonshine, humbug.

What, then, does the Congress Socialist Party dropose ? What must the Swaraj Government do in

addition to nationalising key industries in order to realize the economic freedom of the masses; in order to rid them of exploitation, injustice, suffering, poverty, ignorance ?

The measures that are necessary, in the opinion of the Party to achieve this, are clearly set forth in the *Objectives* section of the *Programme* of the All India Congress Socialist Party.

Here they are:

1. Transfer of all power to the producing masses.
2. Development of the economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the State.
3. Socialisation of key and principal industries (e. g. Steel, Cotton, Jute, Railways, Shipping, Plantations, Mines), Banks, Insurance and Public Utilities, with a view to the progressive socialization of all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange.
4. State monopoly of foreign trade.
5. Organization of co-operatives for production, distribution and credit in the unsocialized sector of economic life.
6. Elimination of princes and landlords and all other classes of exploiters without compensation.
7. Redistribution of land to peasants.
8. Encouragement and promotion of co-operative and collective farming by the State.
9. Liquidation of debts owing by peasants and workers.
10. Recognition of the right to work or maintenance by the State.
11. "To every one according to his needs and from every one according to his capacity" to be the basis ulti-

mately of distribution and production of economic goods.

12. Adult franchise on a functional basis.
13. No support to or discrimination between religions by the State and no recognition of any distinction based on caste or community.
14. No discrimination between the sexes by the State.
15. Repudiation of the so-called Public Debt of India.

There are fifteen measures as we see. They look forbidding; appear to be too drastic; too extreme; too foreign sounding. They are, in fact, simple enough, reasonable enough, just and practicable enough. And as for their foreign sound—well, they sound no more foreign than the Constituent Assembly, the Legislative Council, the Tariff Board, the siren of the cotton mills or the hooting of the latest Cadillac (shall we say ?).

They are all intended to establish the rather simple principle that we discussed in Chapter I of the abolition of private ownership of functional property, which, as we saw, was the real villain of the piece—the source of all our evils, or most of them. They are further intended to establish the most eminently reasonable of principles of social life—social planning.

Of the fifteen measures proposed by the Party, I shall deal only with Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, and 12. The remaining are self-explanatory.

(1) Transfr of all Power to the Producing Masses

The cornerstone of the whole scheme is the transference of all power, political as well as economic, to the

producing masses, i. e., to those engaged in producing goods or rendering services either by hand or by brain. If all power goes into the hands of those who work, it follows that those who do not work shall have no power.

The principle involved here is a basic one. Hitherto, in all the known forms of social organisation, sovereign power has always rested not with the labouring masses, who in every society preponderated in numbers, but with the possessing classes. Before the rise of modern democracy, this was obvious in all the political systems that preceded it. The State was openly in the hands of the ruling class; it was an instrument of class oppression. It was so even in the so-called Greek Democracies in which a small group of citizens ruled over and oppressed a much larger number of slaves who worked for them.

It was with the appearance of the ballot-box and the party system of government that the fiction of democracy came into being. These two institutions were supposed to have conferred power on the whole people, equally on the humblest and the highest. But the economic order which weighs the scales too heavily on the side of the propertied interests, makes of this democracy a mockery. The rich have their great resources, their huge election funds, their great newspapers, their schools and colleges. And the poor ? Well, they can have their dole, or jolly well starve. The right to exercise the vote in these conditions means little to the workers.

And even this sham democracy, this mockery, turns against the poor workers when, in spite of all odds they

seem strong enough to disturb the scales of the economic order ever so little in their favour. The cry of revolution and "reds" goes up and what looked like democracy disappears like a mist. The ballot-box is withdrawn from the reach of the workers, party-government is thrown over on to the scrap-heap. Fascism is enthroned. The scales of the economic order are more firmly adjusted in the interests of the masters.

On such a background we inscribe the words: "All power to the masses".

We might be told that we are talking through our hats. The thing is just not possible.

We firmly declare that it is. We do so, because we know the secret of power—economic domination. When those who toil become masters of the economic order, the thing is not only possible, but natural. If we were to content ourselves merely with this one item, without the proposals which follow, we would no doubt have been guilty not only of talking through our hats but also of perpetrating a fraud.

(2) Development of the Economic Life of the Country to be Planned and Controlled by the State

One of the greatest contributions of Socialism to humanity lies in the fact that it brings social progress under man's conscious control and direction. So far, with individualism and selfishness holding the centre of the stage, society has progressed blindly. A clash of

purposes and interests has been the chief lever in its evolution. There has been no planning, no social purpose for which we have consciously and corporately striven. "Each for himself" is a pattern of social behaviour with which we are all so familiar.

It is in the sphere of community of purpose and corporate endeavour that Socialism holds the noblest prospects for the future of mankind; and it is collective planning of the future that so unquestionably establishes its superiority over the present disordered social "order". In releasing hidden springs of initiative and creativity, in making it possible for humanity to mould its growth, Socialism opens a new page in history — new alike from the viewpoint of material progress as from that of moral and intellectual advance. A social will takes the place of the individual will.

What this may mean to men — to masses of men and women — may best be seen by turning to Russia, where a faith and a spirit seem to have been awakened for which neither the sky nor the sea, the wind nor river, remains unconquerable. To think that only a few years back this country was one of darkest despair and most oriental lethargy !

An essential part of any scheme of planned social progress must be a planned economy. The economic organization of a country is the key to its entire life. Therefore, control over the economic organization and its conscious direction in the interests of the commonweal are a basic requirement.

What is economic planning ? For a detailed answer we must carefully study the great Russian experiment in socialist planning. Various prejudices have been implanted in the public mind with regard to it, ranging from such remarks as "it is bureaucratic and corrupt", "it has killed initiative" etc , etc., to such emphatic declarations as "it has totally failed".

It will take me too far away from my subject to consider these prejudices. It would be sufficient to observe that while every national and international effort at solving the present crisis of capitalism has abjectly failed, Russia alone has kept her head high, has made steady progress in production and in raising the standard of living. In a period of extensive unemployment, Russia alone is a country where there is a shortage of hands.

The essentials of economic planning are that production, distribution and saving (in the form of State investments) are properly adjusted and that all three march along a road carefully laid out in advance in accordance with the resources, equipments and needs of the people. The fundamental requirement is that there should be no private economic interests, separate from the social interest, between which a clash might develop.

As Grinko has pointed out at the very beginning of his authoritative work on the Five Years Plan, it is incorrect to think that planning is carried out by a group of statisticians sitting in a central place and dictating to the entire economic system. Planning, in reality, is a *process*

in which every unit of production, i.e., every factory and collective farm; and every unit of distribution, i.e., every co-operative and State store, take part. The men at the top co-ordinate, fit things together, guide and direct. Indeed, Russia seems most anxious to avoid centralization of economic control. The country has already been divided into autonomous geographical units of production with administrative freedom and full creative initiative.

A common prejudice regarding planned economy is that under it every individual would be dictated to as to the articles he should wear and eat and the manner in which he should live. This, as a matter of fact, is true rather of capitalism than of planned life under Socialism. The forces, however, that determine these things for us under capitalism are the chaotic uncontrolled laws of capitalist economy. Under Socialism not only are these chaotic laws converted into *purposive and determined ends* but also is the individual taken into confidence through his factory, farm or co-operative as to his views of national needs and his own requirements.

In this connection the following excerpt from a recent article of Louis Fischer's on "the Russian Consumer", should prove interesting and enlightening:

> Today's *Isvestia* reports as follows: "The flower kiosks and stores of Moscow have commenced to sell roses and peonies at low prices. These flowers are delivered in Moscow by aeroplane from the gardens of the Green Trust in Essentuki, Rostov-on-Don and Yalta. Each day about 5,000 roses and 2,000 peonies are brought to Moscow in this manner." Essentuki, Rostov and Yalta.

are approximately thirty-six hours by train from Moscow.

During the last few weeks, owing to Moscow's unusually late and cold spring, strawberries, too, are being transported to the city by aeroplanes from points south.

The first cars for the new Moscow subway were made with hard seats. But they were never used. The authorities gave strict instructions that all cars be leather-upholstered. Now, after their trying experiences in the overcrowded surface trolleys, Moscovites would be only too happy to travel by the fast under-ground, even if its cars had no seats at all and even if the stations were not exquisitely decorated with marble columns, coffered ceilings, and modern lighting effects. Why did the Government go to the expense and trouble of introducing exceptional comforts and beauty ?

Stalin, according to the Communist daily *Pravda*, has demanded that all factory directors "give the Soviet consumer goods of the highest possible quality, and in any case, goods that are not worse than those shipped abroad." The Red Press insists on "beautiful Soviet goods that please the eye."

In the Soviet Union, there is no competition, either fair or unfair, between manufacturers. Moreover, the shortage which still prevails in some branches and the rapidly rising demand are a guarantee that everything produced is easily sold. No Bolshevik director need be concerned about his market. Eager purses await his output.

In such circumstances, there is no compulsion upon Soviet retail business to go out of its way to supply the best goods or to attract trade with special displays, improved salesmanship methods and home deliveries as it has recently been doing. After all, the State could

> reason that citizens can live without roses, that they can wait for strawberries until the middle of the summer, that they will carry their packages themselves, that they will wear cotton if they cannot get silk or wool...... ......The Government has a political monopoly of industrial production and retail distribution. What it does not sell is not available anywhere else. Yet the Kremlin's greatest emphasis today is on quality and variety, and on the beautifying of daily life through the introduction of comforts and luxuries for the greatest number.

"This is the answer", says Louis Fischer, "to an old argument against planned economy and government ownership which has recently been renewed in England and America." The argument, as I have stated, is that every individual would be dictated to as regards every detail of his life. "Everybody would wear brawn suits, and eat liver on Thursdays and beans on Fridays." "Soviet experience and practice", Fischer asserts "completely explode this theory" He goes on to say:

> Bolshevik factories produce heel-less boots for Georgians, fur boots for Siberian hunters, high-heeled tinted chrome leather slippers for the metropolitan "flapper", light kaftans for the Turkomans, turbans for the Uzbeks, skull caps for the Tartars, felt hats for the stylish city beaux, etc., etc. Each plant has its own artists who turn out different designs for textiles and cloth. As time goes on assortments grow, and the press calls incessantly for richer variety. The Government maintains woman's dressmaking and men's cloth establishments which fill individual orders. One can give free rein to one's imagination as long as one's purse keeps pace with it.
>
> I have seen exhibitions arranged by large trusts which

display all the articles they make and ask visitors to fill in a card with their preferences. The goods are then manufactured in quantities corresponding to the votes each received. This, to be sure, may be perhaps not the best of all possible methods, but it certainly suggests that the Soviet producer wants his customer's likes and dislikes to affect the character of output.

The *Pravda* recently explained the Bolshevik attitude towards this question. "What is it all for?" the paper asks. Why all these Soviet efforts to improve conditions, build more factories, register technological progress, produce beautiful high-quality goods? "For the sake of the people" it replies. "For the sake of the producers, the Soviet consumer, for the sake of our nation. No matter what product a plant makes, be it a lathe or a shoe, a turbine or a nail, it must always think of the human being, of our Soviet citizens, of the millions of excellent builders of Socialism who will use these articles."

When goods are manufactured for use rather than for profit and when every producer is a consumer and every consumer is a producer, it is only natural that the producer should be interested in creating the best commodities for himself, the consumer. The reason why planned economy, far from eliminating choice, emphasises choice, is that in the U. S. S. R. there is no divorce between production and consumption. The Russians, therefore, can no more have over-production than they can have under-consumption. And the State's first concern is the gratification of the wishes of the gainfully employed. The gainfully employed are the State, in fact. The State plants the strawberries, the State constructs the aeroplane, and the State or the gainfully employed eat the strawberries. The more strawberries, the more peonies, the softer the seats in the subway, the finer his wife's shoes, the more eagerly and loyally does the worker

produce at his bench. The State provides for people so that they may provide for it, that is, for themselves. (*The New Statesman and Nation*, July 20 1935.)

I have said above that a fundamental requirement for planning is that there should be no private interests separate from and opposable to the social or common interest. But, I may be asked, are not countries like the U. S. A , Germany and Italy made up wholly of private interests and, yet, are they not planning their economic life ?

It is true that the capitalist countries are also taking the road to planning. Owing to the economic crisis that has now continued for six years, in spite of all attempts to liquidate it, it was made clear even to the capitalist class that the old, unrestricted, chaotic capitalist system had grave shortcomings which caused the breakdown of the entire capitalist machinery of production, finance and trade. Therefore, attempts were made to regulate the working of the machinery by certain breaks and gears — starting from the "codes" of Roosevelt to the industrial "corporations" of Fascism.

The general failure of all these attempts, some of which, as, for instance, the fascist attempt in Italy, have had a sufficiently long life, only emphasizes my contention that planning is possible only after private interests have been got out of the way. When Roosevelt ushered in his N.R.A. and A.A.A., there was an outburst of enthusiasm. That enthusiasm has touched the depths of despond now, and the very men — the flower of the American universities — who acclaimed Roose-

velt as a saviour, have turned into bitter cynics, if not active opponents. The last embers of hope in the N. R. A. have cooled down.

The failure of capitalist planning, as against the success of socialist planning, is due to the grave difference between the two. The purpose of capitalist planning is not to refashion and run the economic machine in the interest of the whole of society, but to ensure that the stream of profits should flow uninterrupted into the pockets of the capitalists. But profits which are the life-blood of capitalism are also its chief malady. As long as profits are sought, no recovery is possible. The symptoms of the disease will keep reappearing. At the same time if profits are eliminated, capitalism dies. Thus there is a vicious circle drawn from which Socialism alone offers an escape.

(3) SOCIALIZATION OF KEY AND PRINCIPAL INDUSTRIES, ETC.

This is the foundation stone of the whole scheme. The State of the masses must be based on the abolition of the rule of the classes over the economic sphere. The economic freedom of the masses must mean the ending of economic exploitation engendered by private ownership of functional property. Socialist planning must start first with destroying vested interests.

The ultimate object as stated in this section is the socialization, that is, bringing under social ownership and control, of all the means of production, distribution and exchange. This means that finally all factories and workshops, all raw materials, all trading, all banking

and financing will pass into the hands of the Community. There will be no private ownership at all in these spheres.

This does not mean that a man may not have personal property, i e., property which is of only personal use to him and is not put to the creation of more property.

Dr. Sherwood Eddy describing the aim of the Russian Communists, who have by no means reached the ultimate goal, writes: "The aim of the Communists was to confiscate all unearned wealth and all functional property. A man might have his personal property, such as a house, clothing, objects of art, a bicycle, an automobile, a radio, a bank account, and government bonds. He might save his money, though there was now little incentive or opportunity to do so. All the privileges or security for himself and family for which he had once saved or hoarded were now socially provided for all who worked."

Thus, while the ultimate objective is the socialization of life itself, there are certain necessary measures which the Party. urges, must be enforced to start with. Not only the key industries, but also all the principal industries (Cotton and Jute while not being key industries, are certainly the principal industries of India); not only industries but banks, all transport, plantations, mines, public, utilities, insurance; in fact, all the important economic institutions and activities which dominate social life, must be brought under social control.

Let us see what exactly would happen by taking one industry. Take Cotton. A decree would be issued

announcing that the eighty odd mills of Bombay (let us take Bombay alone for illustration) have become the property of the Indian people. A Cotton Industries Department would be set up to run the factories in conjunction with the representatives of the workers in the industry and in accordance with the National Economic Plan. The Department would decide in accordance with that Plan, how much cotton should be bought and what manner and quantity of cotton goods should be manufactured, in order to fulfil the needs of the Community within its existing resources.

Distribution of the manufactured goods might be rationed—that is, it may be fixed that each person is to buy only so much—if the supply is too little. Or the goods might be put on the market at fixed prices, if there is enough of them.

Rationing may seem to be an oppression to some, but only to those who have money to buy as much as they want. It would not seem harsh to those who have even less than a loin cloth to cover their body with, to those thousands of Indian families which have just one whole *sari* in common, between a number of women, so that only one of them goes out at a time, the rest keeping indoors, clad in rags and in less than rags.

What of the workers of the mills that have been socialized? The workers, from wage slaves, would become, along with the rest of the Community, the masters of the factories in which till now they slaved and sweated. Their representatives, their unions, will have a decisive hand in

running the mills. Their wages will rise. Better houses will be built for them. Shorter hours of work. Schools for their children. Maternity houses. Parks, museums, libraries. The workers would be transplanted into a new world—a world of freedom, of initiative, of power, of opportunities for cultural advancement.

And what of the owners ? The owners, in a society of workers, would have to become workers too. They will have opportunities to work and to serve the Community, perhaps as managers and experts—if they had the ability.

No compensation would be paid to the owners, and for very good reasons. A society which aims at social equality cannot start by creating inequalities of wealth. A society which starts with the thesis that ownership of functional property has meant exploitation, that profits are surplus-value, cannot be expected to recognise the claims of individuals who have owned such property in respect of the socialization of that property. A system that is declared to be unjust cannot be tacitly approved of by the payment of compensation. Furthermore, the owners most probably would have enough resources laid by in the shape of personal property not to require any more. What need will they have for more wealth if they, like the others, are fully provided for, i. e., if they work ? Owners in fact, with any noble instincts in them, will throw in their lot with the new dispensation and join in building the new and greater society.

All this, of course, would be different if the owners tried to be "funny". If they tried to resist the new decrees;

to sabotage the new undertaking; to plot against the new society;—things would indeed go wrong with them. They, in the eyes of the Law, would be the enemies of the people and would be so dealt with. Feeling against them in that case might run very high indeed—because of the revolutionary tension; the instability of the new system; the anxiety to save the newly launched ship from tempests

What will happen to the owners, therefore, is largely dependent on how the owners will behave.

What has been said of the cotton industry would be true of the others too.

There will be planning and building up everywhere, organised production, ordered and equitable distribution.

(4) State monopoly of foreign trade

State monopoly of foreign trade is an essential element of economic planning. In plain terms it simply means that the Community decides what it must import and export. If the question is left to private tradesmen, not the needs of the Community but private profit would determine exports and imports, in which case we may witness the strange spectacle of wheat being exported when there is famine in the land, or cotton being imported when the home producer is unable to market his produce.

Economic planning would be very difficult, almost impossible, with foreign trade in the hands of profiteers. It would be difficult in that case to control currency and prices, production and consumption and to follow successfully any plan of industrial or agricultural

development. The plan would be dislocated at every place.

Apart from these difficulties, private foreign trade would make it possible for the enemies of the Nation, either within or without, to sabotage its economic schemes and activities.

Foreign trade, in fact, affects national life so vitally that even under Capitalism it nowhere exists in an unrestricted, uncontrolled form. The historic Free Trade country—Great Britain—had also recently to renounce the system of unrestricted foreign trade.

(5) ORGANIZATION OF CO-OPERATIVES FOR PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND CREDIT IN THE UNSOCIALISED SECTOR OF ECONOMIC LIFE

The necessity of this measure arises from the fact that the entire economic life cannot be socialized all at once. Only the big concerns can be brought under social ownership at first. That would leave a number of small concerns and businesses still running on individualistic lines. It is to deal with this situation that this measure has been suggested. It aims at replacing this individualistic small business with co-operative concerns.

For instance, let us take the case of small consumers' shops. The State cannot, in the early stages, be expected to open stores in every little community. And yet the individualistic concerns must not be allowed to continue. While they might not do harm, they would, fundamentally, be enemies of Socialism. Therefore, it is

suggested that Co-operative Consumers' Stores should be developed which should take the place of the private ones. If the private shopkeepers join the Co-operatives, well and good; otherwise they must be driven out of business by competition. A well organised Co-operative, on account of its superior resources, would always be able to beat small business, particularly when it had the State behind it.

(6) Elimination of Princes and Landlords and all other Classes of Exploiters without Compensation

If our aim is to create a society free from every kind of exploitation and social injustice, a society in which there is no rank or privilege, this measure is but in the nature of a corollary.

The princes, relics of feudal India, are anachronisms in the modern world. They are maintained and protected by Imperialism for its own purposes; otherwise they would long have been swept away by the modern forces of society.

The princes of India are today the greatest despots in the world. Nowhere else is so much authority and power vested in such irresponsible hands. Great as is the injustice resulting from this, our plea for the abolition of the rule of the princes does not rest on it.

It is the system itself that we challenge and not its excesses. A good prince remains a prince, a good land-

lord remains a landlord, a good millowner is still a millowner. And as long as the social relationships inherent in these terms last, exploitation and injustice last, no matter how well-meaning the human units in those relationships are.

This is a viewpoint which should be fully grasped for a correct understanding of our case.

The existence of even constitutional princes in a Free India would be meaningless, an unnecessary burden, a perpetual obstacle, to the growth of democracy. The masses, society as a whole, would gain nothing by their retention and lose much.

Much the same can be said of the landlords. Landlordism was never a feature of Hindu polity. In the "Hindu" period of Indian history, the tiller of the soil paid a fixed share of his produce direct to the king or his agents. There were no middlemen.

It is, indeed, an irony that when we talk of abolishing the *zamindaris,* we are accused of copying Bolshevik methods and of forgetting the traditions of our great civilization!

The system of landlordism is wholly unproductive except of indolence and irresponsibility. It is a source of loss to both the State and the people. A class of middlemen, performing no social function, appropriates a share of the produce, which rightfully belongs to the cultivator.

Mr. M. L. Darling, who cannot be suspected of Socialism, thus writes of the Punjab landlord: "Taking the province as a whole, it may be said that the landlord is even a greater burden upon society than the money-lender. The money-lender is doubtless an evil, but till he can be replaced, he is a necessary evil. On the other hand, the landlord is too often a parasite living on his tenants, wasting his substance and corrupting his neighbourhood."

Apart from its excesses, the system in itself is an outrage on society. Land is a primary means of production and is the chief source of living in India. Its private ownership not only leads to exploitation and unequal distribution of wealth, but, in the peculiar conditions of India, also to progressive impoverishment and bankruptcy of the majority of India's population.

Where would be the sense of maintaining such a monstrous economic institution, even if its excesses of tyranny and oppression were removed? What would the masses gain by it? How would society profit by it?

As for compensation, much the same argument applies to compensating these classes as was advanced in the case of capitalists.

(7) Redistribution of Land to Peasants

Common ownership being our goal, it would appear rather strange that we should think of redistributing land to peasants. This necessity arises from the fact that common ownership and cultivation of land would

be slow to develop and therefore we will have to begin with peasant proprietorship.

At present there is grave inequality in the size of holdings. While some holdings are of hundreds of acres, others do not even approach an acre. We, therefore, propose to redistribute the land so as to remove these grave inequalities.

(8) Encouragement and Promotion of Co-operative and Collective Farming by the State

With this item we approach one of the most difficult and baffling problems that would face any socialist government, much more so the Indian socialist government. Let us carefully consider the matter.

India is a predominantly agricultural country. It is argued, therefore, that it can have little to do with Socialism. We have already shown above that under present world conditions and with the productive resources of society developed as they are today, it is possible to build up Socialism anywhere, no matter how backward the place may be. If there is a party in power in India desirous of establishing Socialism in the country, the fact of its being predominantly agricultural will not be an impediment. It will lower the pace of socialist reconstruction, but nothing beyond that.

The real question is not the possibility of establishing Socialism; but, whether Indian agriculture, the Indian peasant, the Indian nation, will gain by Socialism. And to this question our answer is emphatic. There is not

the least doubt in our mind that Socialism alone can save Indian agriculture from ruin and bankruptcy; can alone make the peasant prosperous and progressive; can alone make the nation strong and powerful.

The malady of Indian agriculture has gone so far that nothing but a drastic transformation can save it. Briefly, it suffers from the following diseases: vested interests in land which not only exploit the actual tiller of the soil but also make him an indifferent and inefficient cultivator; disproportionately high taxation; an unbearable burden of debt that is fast approaching the breaking point; sub-division of land into utterly uneconomic holdings; low productivity; unsatisfactory methods of marketing; bad credit facilities; lack of balance between industry and agriculture, town and village.

Any of these is a big enough problem to be tackled, but when all of them have to be faced, as they must be, in order to realise a synthetic and comprehensive solution, no possible measure of reform can cope with the situation.

The only solution is to clear away all the vested interests that lead in any manner whatever to the exploitation of the tiller of the soil; liquidate all agrarian debts; pool the holdings and establish co-operative and collective farming, State and co-operative credit and marketing systems and co-operative subsidiary industries.

It should not be supposed that these are "destructive" ideas. They will mean the destruction of nothing but that system of exploitation which is inherent in the relationship

fo tenant and landlord. For the rest, they are wholly constructive, requiring nothing except State guidance, encouragement and propaganda.

Professor Radhakamal Mukherji, in his Agra Extension Lecture, is reported to have admitted that no improvement was possible in Indian agriculture "unless the Indian village was converted from a collection of small isolated holdings to a single co-operative farm, and agriculture was treated as a collective service." An admission which fully bears out our plea.

Those who get frightened at the mere idea of co-operative and collective enterprise, particularly when applied to the field of agriculture, might suggest that a better alternative would be to create solvent and efficient peasant proprietors, each with an indivisible economic holding, and cultivating his land independently.

Our answer is that, if this is actually done, it too will involve changes no less drastic than those required by us, and at the same time the result will be infinitely inferior—from the point of view of both the peasant and the nation.

From the peasant's point of view, because an independant peasant runs greater risks and is at a greater disadvantage as producer, seller, buyer and borrower than the peasant who is a member of a co-operative farm. At the same time, he gets none of the facilities and amenities that a large co-operative enterprise must offer its members. Culturally and ethically he is bound to be a much less developed individual, speaking in terms of

averages, than one who has shed his narrow individualism and identified himself with the Community.

Considered from the nation's point of view, our case is stronger still. And it should be remembered that the peasant too is a part—the greater part in India—of the nation.

While speaking of the necessity of Socialism in India, I pointed out above that we required Socialism here, as elsewhere, not only to free the people from exploitation, but also to enable ourselves to plan and carry out a conscious development of the country's economic and social life. A planned development would be a much greater necessity in India than elsewhere, because life here has been so completely disorganised as a result of imperialistic exploitation.

But with individualistic agriculture, no planning would be possible. Consider the prospect of planning production and distribution in a country where the raw material and the food-stuffs are all grown on little individual holdings. Is the thing possible ? What crops must be raised and how much of each?—are questions which the Community must decide if it wants to decide what manufactured goods it must have; what factories it must build; what food it must consume; what materials it must export in order to import the goods it needs.

This is not possible unless agriculture is organised in larger units than an individual holding. With each village becoming a unit for agricultural production and with each unit working in unison with the others, working

as a part of an organised economy, this could be made possible. Of course, the State, by preferential taxation, may stimulate or curtail the production of given crops even under individualistic agriculture, and thus establish some control over agricultural production, as they did in the early days in Russia. But this would not take the State very far on the road to planning.

Then, again, consider long-time planning. Say, it is desired within a period of years to double the agricultural production of India. Could this be done if agriculture continued to be on an individualistic basis ? Of course, one could educate the farmer in improved methods of cultivation and so on; but that alone would not be sufficient. There are limits to agricultural production when the land is subdivided into little plots individually cultivated.

Take again the problem of establishing a balance between agriculture and industry. There can be no solution of the agricultural problem, unless this balance has been established. But this, again, requires co-operative effort and planning, and here again individualistic farming would prove a stumbling-block.

If we look at the problem from the point of view of psychology, we shall find that Socialism in agriculture, i.e., co-operative and collective farming, is essential for the success of any attempt to recast Indian life on a socialist basis. I have often been asked: why can we not organise our industry on a socialist basis and leave agriculture on the present individualistic one ? Our

answer is that the existence of the two standards—individualism on the one hand and Socialism on the other—would create such maladjustments and friction that the whole hybrid system would be paralyzed. Socialism can never go with millions of peasants, owning their own patches of land, cultivating them for their own profit—narrow, selfish peasants. In the same Community, a part, the smaller part in India and most other countries, cannot live and work in a corporate manner, while the remaining, and larger part, remains wedded to individualism—with all its waste product of social friction and frustration.

If Socialism has to be built up in the country, corporate life and standards must also grow up in the village along with their growth in the cities.

Thus, look at the problem from whichever side you please, the application of socialist principles to Indian agriculture is inescapable.

What exactly, then, is socialist agriculture, what is co-operative and collective farming ?

We all know something about the old Indian village commune. It is true that this was neither the most ancient nor the most common form of agricultural organisation known in India. It finds no mention in the *Manusmriti*. However, it is indisputable that there were long periods of Indian history and long tracts of Indian territory in which a form of village existed—whatever its origin—in which common tenure of land and some-

times also common tillage, were recognised and practised. In Madras such villages existed till the other day.

The socialist aim follows in spirit the lines of the old system—except that the socialist village instead of being a closed circle, a closed economic unit, would be an actively co-operating unit in a larger economic system.

In Russia, where alone in our day Socialism is being built up and where alone a serious attempt has been made, with remarkable success, to socialize agriculture—an agriculture, mind you, no less primitive, no less hide-bound by tradition and dominated no less by an ignorant, indolent, narrowly-selfish peasantry—two types of socialised agriculture, rather three, have grown up.

The first form, a lower one when considered from socialist standards, that we witness, is simply co-operative farming. Under this system, individual holdings remain (though much equalized by the redistribution of the land of the landlords and the capitalist farmers); the old agricultural instruments, horses, etc., remain individual property; but for the purposes of cultivation, the holdings are pooled together and the crop is raised and harvested with joint labour. The produce is distributed according to the size of the holding and the amount of labour put in, after costs have been accounted for.

This is the first lesson in social living. It promotes a community of spirit and by materially increasing the output, it becomes an incentive to the individualistic peasant to take more kindly to community of life and work.

The next step from this is the collective farm. Here no individual holdings remain and the basis of distribution is only the amount of labour put in and, in some unusual cases, unusual needs. But even in the collective village, individual ownership of tools may yet remain, and pigs and cattle and horses may yet be the property of individuals. While an immense growth in communal living has taken place, yet much of life is lived apart.

So we see as the third stage, the "communes" rise, where there is the utmost possible common living.

Commenting on this achievement of socialist enterprise in the U. S. S. R, which he calls a revolution in agriculture, Dr. Sherwood Eddy writes in his latest book*:

> The Soviet Union is now in the midst of the greatest revolution ever known in agriculture. Backward agriculture and the dislocation of the relation between city and the country has been a perennial problem since the decay of the Roman Empire. For four and a quarter years the Soviets tried not only to transform a primitive agricultural country into a modern industrial state, but to collectivize, mechanize and socialize its agriculture among a hundred million peasants scattered over one-sixth of the surface of the habitable world. That, of course, was impossible, but that 'impossible' was almost accomplished, and the back of the rural problem was actually broken. The Soviets have fought their 'battle' of the 'Marne' with the peasants—and won. Russia will never retreat from collectivization.
>
> Until two years ago there was the menace of twenty million individualistic, potentially capitalistic, land-hungry peasants, who had a deep antipathy toward

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> Socialism and might some day defeat or overthrow their Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. After the industrial workers, the peasants will now become the most socialized class. Whatever its overhasty and faulty execution, this will probably yet become one of the great achievements of history.

This is the achievement of Socialism in Russia. What about India ? Is there anything in this system of socialistic agriculture that is impracticable here ? If the Russians have achieved the impossible, why we too cannot do it ? There is no reason to suppose that the Indian peasant is any more averse to common endeavour and the sharing of life than the Russian. What else is the significance in the modern sense of:

सहनाववतु सहनौभुनक्तु सहवीर्यंकरवावहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥

Let us be slow instead of hasty as the Russians. Let us use no coercion. Nor does the Party advocate forcible socialization of agriculture, as it does with industry. *Encouragement and promotion* of co-operative and collective farming is the phrase used—encouragement and promotion through education, propaganda, demonstration, subsidy, preferential taxation.

We might use fewer labour-saving agricultural machinery in view of our population and the shortage of land as compared with the virgin expanses of Russia's territory. This does not mean that we shall retain the present inefficient plough, but perhaps we may not require, at least till industrial development absorbs the surplus rural

population, many tractors and mechanical reapers and binders. We shall electrify the village and give it radio and easy transport, yes. But we might be slow in mechanizing agriculture. We are criticised as being mere imitators of the West. But we are not out to imitate. We only wish to learn.

Let us make fewer mistakes than the Russians, if we are wise enough to avoid them. Remember, it is easy to be wise after the event. Russians were themselves the first to realize their mistakes; and they never set out deliberately to make them. When with test-tubes mistakes cannot be avoided, much less can they be avoided when you are experimenting with millions of men and one-sixth of the globe's surface.

Let not the Russians' mistakes blind us to their great achievements, to the lessons they are teaching Let wise parlour philosophers grin over them and shake their sceptic little heads. For us, who have to do things, who have a task before us, it is the great principle of a new life which the Russians are so boldly practising that alone is of value.

There is a certain type of confused and often interested person who goes about the country saying that the socialists will take away the land from the peasants. We socialists do not have an island across the seas where we shall transport all the land that we shall "confiscate" from the peasants. The lands will be where they are and the peasants will have them and cultivate them. The question only is *how* the peasants shall cultivate their

land so that society may benefit most — the peasants themselves more than anyone else.

The only plea that we put forth is that social good rather than the good of a small number of individuals should be our goal. And I think, I have been able to show that if the land is tilled in common—better still, if it is owned in common too—a great boon would be conferred on India's entire rural population. The village would be transformed from its present mean position to one of prosperity and culture, unknown in any age of Indian history.

Before leaving this topic, I wish to take up a problem which is closely allied to it Among Congressmen there is a large section which is devoutly attached to the village and all it stands for This section, owing to a misunderstanding, feels called upon to take the offensive against the socialists who, it is known, stand for machinery; and therefore, so it is thought, for the exploitation of the village, for the disruption of its beautiful self-sufficient economy (which is non-existent now) and for the growth of parasitic cities.

Let me first of all freely admit all that these friends have to say against the modern cities. These monsters of human habitation—their crowding, their nerve-racking traffic, their insanitation, their ugliness, their slums—rightly make us revolt against them and compel us to look upon them as a menace, as a danger, as enemies of good and sensible living. The city for most of its dwellers is a terrible place of habitation. It has its theatres and resorts

of amusement; but these are more like anodynes for tired nerves and fatigued bodies than things of joy and beauty, from which the soul may draw sustenance, or, if you prefer a modern phrase, which may develop and recreate man's personality.

Further, the modern cities have grown on the exploitation of the people,—not, however, of the village people alone, but also of the city workers. The conditions of this exploitation bring about an unnatural hostility between city and village, in which the latter invariably gets the worse deal. While art, knowledge, luxury, comfort, are concentrated in the cities, the villages remain neglected, undeveloped—terrible contrasts to the cities which they help to create.

While all this is true, it is wrong to imagine that under Socialism this abnormal growth of the social body would be retained or encouraged. Socialism, if anything, is a technic of social engineering which has as its aim the harmonious and well-balanced growth of the whole of society. Neither the socialist village, nor the socialist city, will bear any resemblance to its present prototype. The contrasts, the inner conflicts, would not only not be perpetuated but systematically fought and eradicated.

It is true that the socialist hugs machinery. But to him machinery is not an instrument of exploitation, not stakes and stocks to which to tie the human body and torture it. Machines to us mean friends of labour—things that relieve human toil; increase its productivity; conquer the wind and the sea for us.

The assumption that machinery will inevitably create monstrosities of cities and rural unemployment by disrupting village economy, is wrong. Machines if used for private benefit by a handful of people who own them, will undoubtedly produce these and worse results. But that society as a whole making use of these efficient and poweful instruments of production for the good of the entire population, will also encounter these same results, is too absurd a proposition to be accepted.

Under Socialism the cities will be planned and concentration avoided, because industry will be diffused. There will be geographical planning as well as statistical. On the other hand the villages will be transformed from little clusters of houses—cut off from the world, tucked away into the recesses of the Earth—to progressive communities, connected with the rest of the world with electric railways, telephones, radios, roads, buses. The village too will become an industrial unit of production like the city. It will have its self-government, its schools, its recreation center, its museum.

I cannot do better than quote in this connection a fine description of the socialist village and city, which M. Illin has given in his remarkably written *Moscow Has A Plan:*

> How was the old city built?
>
> In the centre a fortress, a Kremlin, an inner citadel.
>
> Around this centre a ring of markets, shops and stores grew up. And when they began to build factories, a third ring of the city appeared—the factory district. Among these shops, markets and factories they erected

buildings—the better ones in the heart of the city—and the poor ones in the outskrits. A new city will not be built thus. Its centre will be, not a fortress, or a market, but a factory or an electric power station.

About each large electric power station, about each large factory or union of factories, a city will spring up.

Not the grey walls of a fortress with stone teeth and look-out towers, but a green wall of parks will separate the heart of the city—the factory—from the residential sections. This green wall will protect the city from the smoke and soot of factory chimneys.

And the blocks will be different.

From the central square, like the rays of the sun, avenues and boulevards will radiate in all directions. Buildings will not stand in a row like soldiers, all facing one way. Each dwelling will turn toward the sun in order to get as much of its light as possible. While house-communes, schools, libraries, hospitals, will be surrounded with flower-beds. At every entrance you will be greeted by green giants, oaks, pines, lime trees.

Happy singing of birds and the calm, sustained, refreshing voice of trees, instead of the present clang and rumble and roar, will be heard in the streets of the city.

There will be none of those incessant bustle and scramble which now shatter the nerves of all of us city dwellers.

Institutions will be situated far from dwellings. People must live in quiet and peaceful places.

There will be less traffic in the streets and no such colossal cities as we now have. *A city of one hundred thousand inhabitants will be considered too large* (my italics).

Every future city will be a worker's village (mark this word, village—J.P.N.) near a factory. And factories and unions of factories will not all be brought together in one centre as at present; they will be distributed throughout the entire country according to a rational plan. Our raw materials are found, not in one place either, but in a thousand places.

This is the way a city will be built. But how about the village?

There will be no village (my italics). Bread and meat and milk will be secured from factories in govfarms (government farms—J. P. N.) and colfarms (collective farms—J. P. N.). Around each of these agricultural factories will be constructed—food, flour, conservo, meat, refrigeration. All of these will constitute a single union of factories, but agricultural rather than industrial. And around each of these unions a city will rise, an agricultural city. This means that the difference between city and village, between peasant and workman, will disappear. Even the words *peasant* and *labourer* will pass away.

Only the word *worker* will remain.

This will happen after we construct socialism, But already during these five years we shall build about two hundred socialist cities, thousands of house-communes. Already the difference between city and village is being effaced.

Socialism is no longer a myth, a figment of the mind. We ourselves are building it.

A superb vision! And so practicable, so much within the reach of your arm. This is the great thing about socialist visions—they are translatable into fact.

If the problem of city and village has to be solved at all, it is on some such basis that it can be done and not by running away from the city or from the village.

10. Recognition of the right of work or Maintenance by the State

In the capitalist State or in the ones preceding it, there was no security of work and therefore of life. As long as virgin land existed, no security for able-bodied persons was needed. But when land became scarce and could not be secured — nor could employment be found — one had either to starve or rob and plunder. If one did the latter and was caught, one was brought to justice; but if one starved to death — well, God blessed his soul.

This insecurity of employment has become a greater scourge in our days than it ever was. Industrialism has created a propertyless class of workers, who can live only by selling their labour. At the same time, no provision has been made to find employment for them. Each is expected to shift for himself. It was only after industrial crises made a scandal of unemployment, and labour became too militant, that the modern States made provision for unemployment insurance.

In India, the paralysis of both industry and agriculture under Imperialism has resulted in the acutest imaginable form of unemployment.

Under Socialism, this state of affairs would be intolerable. In fact, no just and sensible social order can look with equanimity upon the starvation of millions of its members. Provision for employment or maintenance for every adult member, is the least that

can be expected from any reasonable organization of society. This would be one of the first concerns of a Socialist Government in India, and one of the first guarantees it must give the people

11. "TO EVERY ONE ACCORDING TO HIS NEED AND FROM EVERY ONE ACCORDING TO HIS CAPACITY", ETC.

This is the ultimate ideal of Socialism. It means simply this, that when Socialism is fully developed everyone would put forth his best effort in the service of the Community — in working for it in factories, farms, schools, laboratories, theatres — and would take whatever he needed from the things that were available. Of course if he made, say, bolts and nuts, it is not suggested that he would take as many of them as he wanted. He would have no use for bolts and nuts and there would be no private market in which he could sell them. What he would take according to his needs would be consumption goods — clothes, food, books. There would be no money, no wages, no distinction in incomes.

Let us keep in mind that such would be the ultimate state of society. It presupposes a condition of plenty — that enough of everything of use is available for everyone Till this condition is reached some restriction on consumption would be necessary, either by the direct method of rationing or the indirect method of wages.

Doubts will be raised about the practicability of the principle stated here, even in the case of plenty. The problem is one of social psychology and commonsense

and should not be at all difficult in practice. Let us first remember that a new type of human character would have been created, that selfishness would be looked down upon as a crime and vice rolled in one. In Soviet Russia grain-stealers from collective farms are liable to be shot: such is the sanctity of social property.

On the background of this new psychological outlook, let us consider the practicability of the principle. The suggestion is made that if people were free to take as much as they pleased, they would take advantage of such freedom. But let us consider the nature of the society they would be living in. There would be full security of life and work: provision for old age, sickness, child-birth, etc. The individual would have nothing to worry about except making himself a good man and doing his job well. Things would not be bought or sold in that Community—they would merely be manufactured and distributed. Smuggling of goods across the frontier would be well-nigh impossible, except of jewellery and such other trinkets: that much of jewellery or trinkets would be available in a socialist society is doubtful! In a society like this, what motive could the individual have to hoard things? He could get what he needed, whenever he wanted. They would be *his* things, they would not disappear the next day. Social standards and a sense of complete security would eliminate the hoarding instinct.

Till such a development of society has taken place, there would be restriction of consumption, as I have said above. There would be money and wages and some difference in incomes. Wages are a system of apportion-

ing consuming power. If production increases, wages would rise proportionately to socialist saving, i. e., investment in production goods and expenditure on the provision of social amenities. Differences in wages would continue — within much narrower limits than at present — only as a concession to our present moral standards and the great differences in skill that exist to-day.

12. Adult franchise on a functional basis

This means that representation instead of being on a territorial basis would be on the basis of occupations. Representatives are supposed to represent interests; but interests within a given country are not distributed territorially but functionally, occupationally. Therefore functional representation means truer representation.

This item, it may be added, is meant to meet only the problems of the transition period. In time, occupations, though still diversified, would acquire a unity and solidarity, a community of interest and purpose, which would make such discriminatory representation meaningless. In fact, the State itself in its modern sense would wither away with the full development of Socialism and a classless society. Repesentation in that stage would not be to political assemblies of the State but to Boards of industry, education, and so on. Representative Government would be entirely revolutionized.

* * * * * *

These are the measures which we propose. They are far-reaching measures requiring courage, ability,

faith: virtues, surely not wanting in the new youth of India.

If we dream of creating a great India, it is only these measures that can enable us to realise our dream. If we want to wipe off poverty, injustice, filth, indolence, ignorance from the face of this great country, we can do so only by adopting these bold measures.

If we are told that we are asking for the Moon, I shall firmly reply that we are doing nothing of the sort. If complete Independence is not as far as the Moon, *these* measures are certainly not farther.

It is said that Socialism is not applicable to India. Which of these measures, I ask, is inapplicable to our country, if the will to apply them be present ? If Indian capitalism is weak, that, instead of being a hindrance to us in our task of building up Socialism, should only facilitate it. The backwardness of India did not prevent the British from building railroads, telegraphs, banks, mills, warehouses. These instead of being a boon, as in themselves they ought to be, turned out to be a scourge simply because they were not built for our good. The backwardness of Turkestan has not prevented the Russians from building up Socialism there.

As I have said repeatedly, if we mean to do it, under modern world conditions, with science and its inventions, it is possible to build up Socialism anywhere.

Shall we have the power to do so in India ?

If we acquire sufficient power, as we hope to, to

achieve complete independence, we shall have power to do almost anything in this country. There is no power or party in India stronger than imperialism, and if we humble the latter there will be no one to challenge our will The princes and the landlords, who may seem rather formidable today, propped up by British force, would wither away at our first touch. The capitalists, perhaps a little stronger, would also be powerless to check us.

CHAPTER III

ALTERNATIVES

"Something about 'humanity', as the thing has been recently labelled, something about the 'realisation' of this humanity or rather—monstrosity; a little about property....., some moans about the proletariat, the organisation of labour, miserable associations for the improvement of the lower classes of the people, all combined with boundless ignorance of political economy and actual society—that is the whole story, which, moreover, theoretical impartiality, the 'absolute calm of thought', drains of its last drop of blood, its last energy and elasticity."

Friedrich Engels

ALTERNATIVES TO SOCIALISM

Are there any alternatives to Socialism ?

We are told that there are. There is Gandhism, the Village Industries Association, the old Hindu system found in *Manu* and other ancient treatises on social organisation.

India would be an exception indeed if its soil too did not produce a crop of alternatives to this all-challenging idea. Even in Europe, the birthplace of modern Socialism, these alternatives have not yet lost their vogue. Mr. H. G. Wells has just preached his "Clissoldism" as a

rational and decent alternative to the "class-struggle dogma", to the world-leader of the present socialist movement — Joseph Stalin.

It is interesting to note that all these alternatives bear a pronounced family resemblance. What Gandhiji says today was said by Church divines and philosophers of the old order in Europe at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. Comte said long ago what Wells is now trying to persuade the world to accept.

The resemblance boils down to certain common features. There is found in all of them a conscious attempt to run away from strife and struggle and the sudden upsetting of the *status quo*; and, therefore, a tendency to compose the serious differences and maladjustments — which are universally admitted — through common understanding and goodwill. The method suggetsed is invariably the betterment of human nature through education and the placing of individuals of high moral and intellectual qualities in positions of authority and power.

Socialism and the Indian Background

We have been accused of attempting to import a foreign system into India, which has its own peculiar problems and solutions thereof.

I wish to make it clear that we have no desire to disregard either the peculiar problems of India or its historicultural background. It would indeed be utterly un-Marxian to do so. We have, in fact, examined to the

best of our ability the so-called 'Indian' solutions: and we are satisfied that *under present conditions* they cannot take the place of Socialism. This is no reflection on the genius of the social philosophers of ancient India. Unfortunately for them Indian Society has changed so drastically, its problems have been transformed so radically, that their ideas hardly bear any relation to present facts. There are certain broad principles which hold good in all ages and climes. But broad principles are of little value when concrete means are sought for the removal of concrete evils. And it is here—not in their conception of general social and individual good—that the old systems and their new reflections break down completely.

The old principles were laid down when civilisation was much simpler than at present. Neither industry nor agriculture had devoloped far enough to make it possible for men to exploit the labour of others to any considerable extent. All production was on a small individual scale. Population was low and nature kind and bountiful. It was possible for any able-bodied man to clear the jungle and settle down with his family on the reclaimed land.

From this it is a far cry to our present agrarian and industrial problems. Landlordism is an un-Indian institution, mills and factories are also new to the country. New likewise are all the problems that have been created by the imperialist domination. The basic economic problem of our society—the problem of the exploitation of the many by the few—which arises, as I have shown in Chapter I, from the monopoly of land and other instruments of production—did not exist in its present universal

form at the time of *Manu*, nor, quite naturally, did any solution of it.

Socialism not Bound by National Frontiers

This problem, which we find has no relation with India's ancient past, has, on the other hand, a basic unity with the problems of the modern world. In China, Japan, England, France, Germany, the United States of America, the vast majority of people has to face essentially the same problem. The development of the powers of production, in other words, the invention of steam and electric power, has given birth to, and reared, the most extensive and thorough system of human exploitation ever known—the system of capitalist production and distribution.

Socialism, which is an inevitable reaction to this system, is, therefore, not bound by national frontiers. Its home is as much in England as in Japan, as much in Germany as in China, in the United States of America as in India. Wherever conditions of capitalist exploitation exist, Socialism is bound to raise its head. If capitalism has become a world system, Socialism too will spread to the four corners of the globe. India can be, and, as events are showing, *is* no exception.

The existence of feudalistic relics in India modifies its problem to some extent, but it does not change its essential nature. The balance of power between the various sections of the exploited masses would be somewhat different here, and their transition to Socialism

slower—otherwise their *goal* as well as their initial task of *overthrowing* the system of capitalist-*cum*-feudal exploitation and rule, would remain essentially the same as in the developed capitalist countries.

Indian Recipes

It is for those who accuse us of imitating the West, to produce a truly Indian solution of the problems that face us. But though there has been a good deal of talk about India's peculiarities and its unique recipes for its ills, no one seems to have taken the trouble of formulating them in intelligible language—with perhaps only one honourable exception.

As far as I am aware, Dr. Bhagavan Das is the only one among the leaders of the country, who has given serious thought to this problem, and laid before the public what he considers are Indian solutions of Indian problems. To us what is of greater value and importance than the solutions that the learned Doctor advocates, is his bold insistence on the view that the nature of Swaraj is a subject of paramount importance and calls for urgent and earnest inquiry and discussion. But apart from the socialists, the Doctor stands almost alone in holding this view.

As far as most other lovers of Indian culture are concerned, their task is finished after they have tarred us with the brush of 'foreignism' and prated some nonsense about the folly of troubling about matters that concern the remote future. "Let us win Swaraj first" they say.

One wonders if they see the inconsistency of their position when they attack and oppose Socialism. By that action they make it clear that whatever "ism" they might accept after they have won Swaraj, they would, at least, be opposed to Socialism Apart from being a breach of the neutrality they assume, this gives a clear indication of their sympathies.

Before proceeding to consider some of the alternatives, I should like to point out the curious fact that these Indian culture enthusiasts, when they are faced with Socialism, fail to show the least interest in the *Manu*-ite solutions presented to them by Dr. Bhagavan Das. The fate of the Das-Das Swaraj Scheme is well-known. And now his *Ancient vs. Modern Scientific Socialism* has fallen again, it seems, on deaf ears.

To take a concrete instance. It will be recalled that at the time of the last Assembly elections, the learned Doctor had pointed out that according to Indian traditions it was for the people to seek out their leader and ask him to legislate for them and not for " candidates " for leadership to go running about begging the people for their "votes". At that time it was not noticed that the lovers of Indian tradition welcomed Dr. Das' suggestion with any visible enthusiasm. I suspect, on the other hand, that he was looked upon by most of these gentlemen as a mere *Manu*-crank.

The greater part of this talk of "Indianism" is, to my mind, insincere—a mere cloak for reaction and conservatism. If the leaders of the country (with one or two

exceptions) sat down today to forge out a Constitution for India, I have not the least doubt that, in spite of all this condemnation of Socialism as un-Indian, that Constitution would be an utter imitation of the democratic constitutions of the West.

This brings me to the first alternative that I wish to examine.

POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

Political Democracy is not an alternative to Socialism. I wish, however, to examine it here because to a very large section of political workers in the country it represents the only conceivable form of Swaraj.

In the days of Bentham and Godwin it was believed that if the franchise were extended to every adult, the "people" would become so powerful that they would wipe off all the injustices and evils of society. Gradually the franchise *was* extended till the dream of the old radicals was realised. But the millenium refused to arrive The injustices remained, the evils were obdurate. Apparantly something was wrong.

What was wrong was soon discovered. Socialists had long been asking for not merely formal changes in political institutions, but also basic changes in the economic structure of society. They pointed out that political power lay not so much in the right to cast votes as in the control of the economic life of the country. Non-socialists, however, had pinned their faith to the powers of the ballot-box. But when that box failed to deliver the

goods, the cry of "failure of democracy" went up everywhere. And today there is hardly a progressive political thinker in the West who has not come to advocate economic together with political democracy. There are differences of opinion as to how and in what measure to acquire that democracy but no longer does any one believe that political democracy alone will suffice.

What is the position in India ? Unfortunately here we are yet in the days of Bentham and Godwin. The Liberals and the majority of the older Congressmen, have no brighter vision for their country than full Representative Government.

I have again and again been faced with the naive question: would not the masses, if every adult had a vote, capture the political machinery and run it in their own interest ? The answer is most emphatically in the negative. The masses, better educated politically than in India, have nowhere done so. While democracy has conferred on them equality of status in a formal, legal sense, it has not enabled them anywhere to free themselves from exploitation, hunger, unemployment, slavery.

The United States of America is the richest country in the world and the birthplace of republicanism. It has had the democratic system of government for a century and a half. Yet today there are fifteen million able-bodied men and women there, with families to support, who cannot even find ordinary means of livelihood. Is it not strange that such a state of affairs should exist in a country that has had, for so long, a government which is

proudly said to be "of the people for the people and by the people." Strange that the people should have governed themselves to starvation!

What then is wrong with political democracy? Briefly, that its machinery is such that in a society where great differences in wealth and social status exist, the classes which are economically dominant easily capture and enslave it. In fact, historically considered, the growth of modern democracy was co-eval with the growth of capitalism. Democracy was an instrument in the hands of the rising bourgeoisie to fight feudal privilege and power. Thus, the forces that gave birth to democracy themselves tied it to the chariot wheels of capitalism. The democratic State became a tool whereby the rule of the bourgeoisie was established and maintained. Thus, behind the fiction of the People's Sovereignty stalks naked class rule. The experience of every democratic country of the West proves this beyond the shadow of a doubt.

An experiment with pure political democracy in India would yield no better results—indeed, it might have worse consequenees. The democratic Indian State might become a worse tool in the hands of the upper classes for grinding the faces of the poor and exploited. There is nothing that one knows about these classes in India that encourages one to hold out a more cheery prospect. It is common knowledge that the British millowner is a better employer than the Indian. The exploits of the Indian landlords and bankers are well known. The princes have no peers in the line of tyranny and oppression.

What will become of the "people" when these classes come to power ?

Evolution by Stages ?

It might be urged that we cannot jump the stages of social evolution, that we must pass through the capitalist-democratic experience of Europe before we can take the next step to Socialism. Russia and Soviet China give the lie to this argument. It is true that full Socialism cannot be established in a country till it is fully industrialised. An industrially backward country like India will naturally take some time to be fully industrialised; and therefore it cannot be immediately converted into a socialist country. There can be no doubt regarding this. What is not equally clear to us is, why this industrialization and general economic development must be under the tutelage of capitalism ? When the forces of Socialism have appeared, when they have proved so successful in precisely this very task in one-sixth of the globe, when capitalism is in decay and instead of developing the powers of production is curtailing them, there should be no reason why any intelligent person should deliberately want to hand over the masses to their exploiters merely so that the latter may economically develop the nation. The growing and steady economic success of Socialist Russia amidst general capitalist chaos and paralysis, has already demonstrated the superiority of socialist forces in the task of building up the productive forces of society.

There is another important consideration. If the

capitalist class in India succeeds—it cannot, but assuming so for argument's sake—in carrying through the Indian National Revolution under its leadership, then, undoubtedly, it would be in a position to establish its own rule over the country (in alliance with the landed interests) either under the cover of democracy, or openly as a fascist regime. In that case the people would have to go through a second revolution in order to win their emancipation.

If, on the other hand, it is the masses—the workers, peasants and impoverished urban middle classes—that overthrow imperialism, it would be criminal for any one to suggest that after having captured power they should hand it over to the capitalists. A capitalist phase in that event, would mean a deliberate and fatal sacrifice of the interests of the masses. The only reasonable course would be for the masses to establish their own rule under the leadership of their most revolutionary and conscious section — the working class — and march towards Socialism.

GANDHISM

Gandhiji has never directly and comprehensively dealt with the nature of society under Swaraj; therefore it cannot be said that he has any consistent alternative to Socialism. However, he has made statements on various occasions and some of his economic views can be garnered from his writings. These, if not to Gandhiji himself, to his followers undoubtedly, appear as

providing an adequate alternative to Socialism. "Gandhism is true Socialism for India", is a remark which one hears not infrequently. It is for this reason that I propose to examine those views of Gandhiji that are germane to my subject.

Before doing so, let me repeat the problem we have set before us. We are interested in *permanently destroying the basis of economic exploitation and inequality.* I have shown that the socialist solution is to abolish private ownership of means of production. Let us see how Gandhiji proposes to solve the problem.

One of the most explicit statements of Gandhiji's views on the issues raised by us, is found in the interview that he gave to some zamindars of the U. P. at Cawnpore last year. An authentic version of the interview was published by Sjt. Mahadev Desai.

In order to enable the reader to follow my criticisms, I am giving below the whole of the interview, except a short para at the end which is not relevant to our discussion:

' Question 1 : The Karachi Congress passed a resolution laying down the fundamental rights of the people: and since it recognised private property, nationalist zamindars have supported the Congress. But a new socialist party in the Congress threatens the extinction of private property. How would it affect the Congress policy ? Don't you think that this will precipitate class war ? Will you prevent it ?

Answer: The Karachi resolution can be altered only by the open session of the next Congress; but let me assure you that *I shall be no party to dispossessing the propertied classes of their private property without just cause. My objective is to reach your hearts and convert you so that you may hold all your private property in trust for your tenants and use it primarily for their welfare* (my italics). I am aware of the fact that within the ranks of the Congress, a new party called the Socialist Party is coming into being, and I cannot say what would happen if that party succeeds in carrying the Congress with it. But I am quite clear that if a strictly honest and unchallengable referendum of our millions were to be taken, they would not vote for a wholesale expropriation of the propertied classes. I am working for the co-operation and co-ordination of capital and labour and of the landlord and tenant. It is open to you to join the Congress as much as it is open to the poorest. by paying a fee of annas four and subscribing to the Congress creed. But I must utter a note of warning. I have always told the millowners that they are not exclusive owners of the mills and workmen are equal sharers in the ownership. In the same way I would tell you that the ownership of your land belongs as much to the ryots as to you; and you may not squander your gains in luxurious or extravagant living, but must use them for the well-being of the ryots. Once you make your ryots experience a sense of kinship with you and a sense of security that their interests as members of a family will never suffer at your hands, you may be sure that there cannot be a clash between you and them and no class war. A class war is

foreign to the essential genius of India which is capable of evolving communism broadbased on the fundamental rights of all on equal justice. The Ramarajya of my dream, ensures the rights alike of the prince and the pauper.

You may be sure that I shall throw the whole weight of my influence in preventing a class war. I do not know what I am going to do after the termination of my self-imposed restriction on August 3; but I shall try my best to avoid going back to prison. But it is difficult to predict anything with certainty in a situation of which I am unaware today But supposing that there is an attempt unjustly to deprive you of your property you will find me fighting on your side.

Question 2 : We propose to support the Congress in the next Assembly elections. But we have our misgivings about the policy they will adopt in the Assembly. Could you persuade the Parliamentary Board to dispel our fears?

Answer: I invite you to discuss this thing with the members of the Parliamentary Board. I know, however, that no member will talk of expropriation or extinction of private property. They will certainly insist on a radical reform in your relations with the ryots, but that should be no new thing to you. Even Sir Malcolm Hailey and Lord Irwin appealed to you to realise and live up to the spirit of the times. If you will only do this, you may be sure that we shall be able to evolve an indigenous Socialism of the purest type. The Socialism and the Communism of the West are based on certain conceptions

which are fundamentally different from ours. One of such conceptions is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it for I know that the essential difference between man and brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior to the passions that he owes in common with the brute and, therefore, is superior to the selfishness and violence which belong to the brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man. That is the fundamental conception of Hinduism which has years of penance and austerity at the back of the discovery of this truth. That is why, whilst we have had saints who have worn out their bodies and laid down their lives in order to explore the secrets of the soul, we have had none as in the West, who have laid down their lives in exploring the remotest or highest regions of the earth. Our Socalism or Communism should, therefore, be based on non-violence, and on the harmonious co-operation of labour and capital, the landlord and tenant.

There is nothing in the Congress creed or policy that need frighten you. All your fears and misgivings, permit me to tell you, are those of a guilty conscience. Wipe out the injustices that you may have been consciously or unconsciously guilty of and shed all fear of the Congress and Congressmen. Once you turn a new leaf in the relations between the zamindars and the ryots, you will find us on our side jealously guarding your private rights and property. When I say "us", I have Pandit Jawaharlal also in mind for I am sure that on this essential principle of non-violence there is no difference between us. He

does indeed talk of the nationalisation of property, but it need not frighten you. The nation cannot own property excepting by vesting it in individuals. It simply insures its just and equitable use and prevents all possible misuse; and I do not think you can have any possible objection to holding your property for the benefit of the ryots. The ryots have themselves no greater ambition than to live in peace and freedom, and they will never grudge your possession of property provided you use it for them.

(*The Leader.* August 3, 1934)

Gandhism not exclusively Indian

Before launching upon a criticism of this curious philosophy, it would be profitable to consider if the views of Gandhiji are uniquely Indian. He speaks of "indigenous Socialism"; the "essential genius" of India; the "fundamental conception of Hinduism". Western Socialism is based, according to him, on conceptions that are fundamentally opposed to those of Hinduism. He implies, naturally, that his "indigenous" Socialism, is much better suited to India than our foreign variety. It is important, therefore, to examine this claim to autochthonism.

As a matter of fact, there is nothing new or peculiarly Indian in what Gandhiji says. A large number of Western writers have expressed themselves in a more or less similar strain. The arguments vary in their emphasis but their core remains much the same. Class struggle is silly; capital and labour are inter-dependent

and necessary for each other; revolution is wasteful; a synthesis of the contending forces of society is a higher ideal than revolution; enlightened control of profits, wages and prices; the theory of trusteeship — these are the commonest ideas of the West preached by smug bourgeois professors, thinkers and churchmen.

I mentioned above Mr. H. G. Wells sermonising to Stalin about "Clissoldism". Any one may read that famous interview and discover for himself the essential kinship, behind the superficial difference of language, between Wells' views of class struggle and those of Gandhiji. The whole burden of Wells' talk was that class war is nonsense and that the evils of capitalism can be removed by harmonising and reconciling the interests that are opposed to one another today. What was needed was the right type of leadership. Gandhiji wants to convert the capitalists. So does Mr. Wells.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald too, in his socialist days, was against class war. Says he: "The socialist, therefore, looks with some misgivings upon some recent developments in the conflicts between capital and labour. They are contrary to his spirit; he believes they are both immoral and uneconomic and will lead to disaster. It is only when the worker by brain or by hand does his best for his society that he will create in society that sympathy and support without which the Labour movement will never attain its goal." And again: "Both capital and labour have to serve communal ends, and the great task before all who understand the true significance of present-day conflicts, is to discover how this synthesis of function can

be brought about." *(Socialism: Critical and Constructive).* Apparently England too had an "indigenous Socialism". Unfortunately for all indigenous varieties, this particular commodity has ended in the most approved form of Toryism.

Much has been made of the idea of trusteeship as being truly Indian and natural to the country's spirit of non-violence. William Godwin writes in his *Political Justice*: "The doctrine of the injustice of accumulated property has been the foundation of all religious morality. The object of this morality has been, to excite men by individual virtue to repair this injustice. The most energetic teachers of religion have been irresistibly led to assert the precise truth upon this interesting subject. They have taught the rich that *they hold their wealth only as a trust*; (my italics) that they are strictly accountable for every atom of their expenditure; that they are merely administrators, and by no means proprietors in chief."*

* "Godwin's comment on this teaching is very interesting: "The defect of this system is that they rather excite us to palliate our injustice than to forsake it". And again: "If religion had spoken out, and told us it was just that all men should receive the supply of their wants, we should presently have been led to suspect that a gratuitous distribution to be made by the rich was a very indirect and ineffectual way of arriving at this object. The experience of all ages has taught us, that this system is productive only of a very precarious supply. The principal object which it seems to propose, is to place this supply in the disposal of a few, enabling them to make a show of generosity with what is not truly their own, and to purchase the gratitude of the poor by the payment of a debt. It is a system of clemency and charity

Here a century and a half ago, the same idea was put so neatly in its historical perspective. In face of this statement, the claim of India to this doctrine can be very slender indeed.

The struggle between revolution and reform is as old as human misery. Gandhiji's views are essentially what in socialist history is known as reformism. Its language is Indian but its substance is international. The chief interest of reformism lies in maintaining the established order of society. Only it sees the forces of disruption, and, sensing danger, wishes to neutralise and quieten them. It therefore advocates the administration of palliatives. All that Gandhiji tells the landlord and the capitalist, is that they should *improve* their relations with their tenants and labourers. All will be well then —no dreaded class-war, no discontent, no revolts and upsettings. Reformism is interested not in securing social justice, but in covering up the ugly fissures of society.

A Ramarajya of Paupers

To turn now to Gandhiji's interview. He says: "The Ramarajya of my dream ensures the rights alike of the prince and the pauper". This is the keynote to the entire

instead of a system of justice. It fills the rich with unreasonable pride by the spurious denominations with which it decorates their acts; and the poor with servility, by leading them to regard the slender comforts they obtain, not as their incontrovertible due, but as the good pleasure and grace of their opulent neighbours".

social philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. Even in his dream Ramarajya, the pauper remains along with the prince ! No doubt, Gandhiji wishes to ensure the pauper's rights, though, what those rights will be he does not tell us, nor what the wretched pauper will do with them. But the interesting—almost breath-taking—fact is that in even Gandhiji's *dream* Ramarajya there will be paupers.

A Ramarajya of paupers and princes ! Why not ? How else will the noble souls get an opportunity to practise deeds of high-minded philanthropy and thus prove the Hindu conception of human nature !

Why paupers should remain at all in society—the central question of Socialism—does not even occur to Gandhiji. It cannot, because the existence of paupers is essential for the working out of Gandhian ethics.

Here is the real difference between Socialism and Gandhism—not in the "materialism" of the one and the "spiritualism" of the other. Those, as commonly used, are meaningless words. The starting point of Socialism is the inquiry into the causes of economic inequality; into the origin of princes, landlords, capitalists and paupers; into the secrets of human exploitation. When at the end of the inquiry, the socialist arrives at the root cause, he removes it. The remedy is applied at the source of the social evil.

Gandhism, on the other hand, does not even stop at these questions. It does not occur to it to ask why only a few are in the position of princes, landlords, and

capitalists, while the remaining many are paupers or only just a little better than paupers It accepts the established order with its high and low classes. Its only concern is to improve the conduct of the higher classes towards the lower. Not daring to ask where the landlord's and the capitalist's wealth comes from, it asks them in its compassion, to act as trustees of the poor and to use their wealth for the welfare of the latter.

To a socialist, this philosophy amounts to deception—self-deception and deception of the exploited peoples. According to us, the wealth of the landlord and the capitalist comes from the labour of the ryots and workers, and is, therefore, in the famous phrase of Proudhon, *theft*. To condone this theft, to let it go unquestioned, nay, to sanctify it, is a deceptive philosophy—no matter how unconsciously so.

Not only are the higher classes guilty of theft; they are guilty also of violence. They are guilty of this because the theft of the peoples' produce is maintained and preserved under the threat of violence. But for the law—class law be it noted—and the organized forces of violence behind it, the workers and the ryots would capture tomorrow the lands and factories. As Pandit Jawaharlal writes: "It is well to realise that those who belong to the favoured and possessing classes retain these positions by methods of coercion alone." (See "Some criticisms considered" in his *Recent Essays and Writings*).

By not questioning the right of the prince, landlord and capitalist to continue their functions, Gandhiji has

signified his tacit approval of this large-scale, organized theft and violence. Nay, the approval is not tacit; it is open and avowed. He has told the landlords that he would resist any attempt to deprive them of their property; and a little earlier he had told the Ahemedabad Mill-owners that it was their moral right to make the money they were making.

THE SHARK A TRUSTEE OF THE MINNOW

Gandhiji now tells the upper classes that they must hold their property in trust for their tenants, labourers, etc.; now that they are equal sharers in their property with the latter; again that they should hold their property for the benefit of their poor; yet again that they should treat the latter as members of their family. This is Gandhiji's indigenous Socialism of the purest type — the harmonious co-operation between labour and capital, landlord and tenant.

Let us first note the indefiniteness and self-contradiction of all this. The landlord, for instance, is a trustee. What part of his wealth must he hold as a trust. The whole or a portion of it ? If a portion, what and who determines the portion ? If again, his tenants are equal sharers in his wealth, what exactly is meant by an equal share ? Does it mean that half of the property belongs to the landlord and half to the tenants ? Or does it mean that the landlord and his tenants taken together are each an equal partner ? How can a sharer remain a trustee ? What is the meaning of 'members of a family' ? Is it that the tenants are free to use the palaces of the

taluqdars and commission their limousines to drive to the city ? What again is the meaning of harmonious co-operation ? Who will bring about this co-operation ?.

These are questions not to be lightly brushed aside. There are others and weightier ones.

Why is the tenant or the labourer an equal owner with his master ? What proof Gandhiji has for his assertions ?.

If it is said that the tenants and labourers are equal owners of their master's property because they are its producers, then, why should they not keep to themselves what they produce ? Why should they be asked to hand it over to others who will then act as their trustees ? Is it just to enable the latter to play the pious philanthropist ?.

We may consider the same question from the other end: *why* should the upper classes act as trustees ? They can very well assert, as in fact they do, that their wealth is wholly theirs, earned by their brains and capital, and that no one has any claim to it.

If the property that is in the hands of the wealthy is not theirs, no one has any justification in encouraging them to keep it and on top of it to make a show of charity. If, on the other hand, it is theirs, earned rightfully by them, no one has any cause to ask them to give it away to others. If the poor starve, let them; it is not the fault of the wealthy.

Thus we find Gandhism to be in a serious bog of timid economic analysis, good intentions and ineffective moralising.

There are only two alternatives: either to prove that the wealth of the wealthy is unjustly acquired and then to demand their expropriation; or to admit that it is rightfully theirs; and then to keep mum in all decency, instead of trotting out pious wishes so that the poor may not feel that they are to be neglected.

The problem is not one of morality or ethics. It is a problem of scientific analysis of property and the method of its production and distribution. This problem should be boldly faced instead of being covered up under a slush of sentimentality. Karl Marx did the greatest service to humanity when he undertook the analysis of capitalist property and proved that it was based on the exploitation of labour. Bourgeois professors have not yet forgiven Marx for proving scientifically what was previously asserted only in fits of moral indignation. That is why we have so many "refutations" of his labour theory of value

If one shirked this analysis, one lost the right to ask anybody to part with his wealth, except in charity.

Pulling out the Tiger's Teeth

How is this theory of trusteeship to be worked out in practice ? How does Gandhiji propose to convert the upper classes into trustees of the lower ? By appealing to

their sense of morality, by reaching their hearts. "My objective is to reach your hearts and convert you", he told the U. P. landlords, "so that you may hold all your private property in trust for your tenants and use it primarily for their welfare."

I wonder if this too is taken as a peculiarly Indian solution. It is, indeed, a method that is common to all great religious teachers. How much success the previous teachers had — including Jesus Christ — is a fact of history. Now Gandhiji comes along wielding his wand, claiming to perform the old magic.

I do not know if the seven zamindars who had the benefit of Gandhiji's teaching at Cawnpore, as they also had previously of that of Lord Halifax (Irwin) and Sir Malcolm Hailey, are now acting as the trustees of their tenants. I am aware, however, that Gandhiji's views have found ready and welcome acceptance among the upper classes and that there are some amongst them who are their most eloquent defenders. This is natural enough. For the acceptance of this philosophy costs them nothing except perhaps an occasional donation to a public cause, the amount of which they soon recover either by virtue of the publicity gained or by a business manoeuvre. At the same time, the philosophy strengthens their position a great deal by giving it a moral sanction.

Gandhiji says in his interview that he has "always told the millowners that they are not exclusive owners of the mills and workmen are equal sharers in the ownership." He does not tell us however — and this is the

real question — if he has achieved any success in this direction. Gandhiji has been associated with the Labour Union of Ahemedabad and is one of its builders. Can he, or any one else, say that in the struggle between the Union and the millowners, a change of heart has been noticed? Is it not only the fear of the strength of the Union, the risk of a general strike, the odium of turning down the compromises of a man of Mahatmaji's influence, that lead the millowners to come to terms with Labour? And have those terms ever meant a real sacrifice for the capitalists, made willingly for the good of their workers? There is all the difference in the world between a compromise on hours and wages and the theory of trusteeship and family kinship.

Wanted a School of Yoga

If during his lifetime, Gandhiji has not succeeded in reaching the hearts of the upper classes, how does he expect that this will be done after he is removed from the arena of the world? A great teacher has never been succeeded by an equal. "Followers" have always been known to be petty people, chopping texts and quarelling over interpretations. Does Gandhiji believe that he is leaving behind him a band of people who will carry his mission of conversion to fruition? If not, what other agency has he in mind that will ensure its success?

Whatever agency it is, it should be evident that it must have two virtues: it must be effective and self-procreating. Hearts must be changed — not of isolated

individuals, but of whole classes. And the "changed hearts" must be handed down from generation to generation. But the acquired virtues of the heart are not necessarily inherited. A good father not infrequently begets an unworthy heir. Therefore, an agency of such permanence is needed as will make it possible for each generation of capitalists and landlords to be inculcated with the spirit of trusteeship.

It is necessary to point out that this conversion will have to be carried on in an environment to which the very idea of trusteeship is foreign — an environment of individualism, of private profit; an environment, furthermore, in which, if a "trustee" reverts to type there is no punishment, either automatic, as resulting from the laws of his society, or imposed deliberately by some outside agency. If any thing, the deserter will find that as far as his own interests go, they are served much better than when he was playing at trusteeship.

Is it possible that an agency that will succeed in this stupendous task of conversion can be created ? Dr. Bhagavan Das suggests a school of Yoga. A great leader may succeed in founding such a school, but that it will bear any fruits, it is difficult to believe.*

* I may be reminded here of the Brahmins of ancient India. But what was the function of the Brahmins ? Briefly, to protect and strengthen, by moral and religious sanction, the established order. No amount of intellectual heterodoxy was disagreeable to the Brahmins if the social order was left undisturbed Every movement of social reform found the power of the Brahmins arrayed against it. It is a mistake to imagine that the Brahmin

The question is not one of human nature. When the socialist denies the practicability of the change-of-heart philosophy, he does it for no lack of faith in human nature. Gandhiji has misunderstood 'Western' Socialism entirely when he says that it is based on the essential selfishness of human nature. Nothing can be further from the truth. Had socialists taken such a low view of human nature, they would never have dared to proclaim as their ideal, a society based on the pursuit of common welfare. Has it not been the most persistent argument against Socialism that it assumes an impossible refinement of man's nature ?*

Quite contrary to what Gandhiji thinks, the socialist has an unlimited faith in human nature and it is one of the major items of his constructive programme to remould

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was engaged in mitigating social differences. If anything, he strengthened and buttressed them True, he preached charity; but charity has ever been known to be the ally of vested interests.

I should point out that I am speaking here only of the Brahmins as a class and not of individual revolutionary Brahmin leaders.

* Only the other day at the Bombay Suburban Conference, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai repeated the age-worn argument. "This was not the occasion, he continued, to evaluate Socialism and Communism as the basic structure of society; but it had to be admitted that in the ultimate analysis, Socialism and Communism, to be a stable basis of society, could come into existence onlv with a radical change in human nature, and in particular the tendency of the human mind to put forth the best so that the gain might be appropriated by him; and the instinct was to be supplanted by a new, when man would put forward the best, in order that society might gain its result" (Report of *The Hindustan Times.*)

it. Russia, of whose crude methods so much nonsense has been written, has already achieved a remarkable success in this direction. I shall quote the testimony of an impartial observer like Sherwood Eddy : "In Russia where motives are anticipated ends, the very bigness of the end modifies all ordinary pursuits and methods. Immediate needs can be controlled in the light of long time values. Actually where private property in land and all means of production has practically ceased to exist, and where it is virually impossible to make a private fortune, *human service is taking the place of private profit upon such a scale that it is something new under the Sun".* And again: "Humanitarian and higher ethical ends are increasingly utilised as incentives in Soviet Russia. Their *faith in human nature* and especially in the common man that he will respond favorably to a favorable environment is validating itself in results" (my italics).

Not Change of Heart but Social Revolution

The socialist's denial of the philosophy of change-of-heart does not spring from his lack of faith in human nature, but from his understanding of human psychology—the relation between behaviour and environment. He believes that it is the social environment which shapes human behaviour. A capitalist exploits labour not because he is vicious, but because that is what the particular society in which he lives wants him to do. If he attempted to do anything else, he would be pushed aside and others would take his place.

The socialist, therefore, believes that if the behaviour

of whole groups and classes has to be changed, a change should be effected in the social organisation itself. For instance, if the capitalist class has to be prevented from exploiting labour, the organisation of society must be so altered as to make that exploitation *impossible*. That is why Sherwood Eddy in the above citation prefaces his remark about human service taking the place of private profit in Russia by the words: "actually where private property in land and all means of production has practically *ceased to exist*, and where it is virtually *impossible* to make a private fortune" (my italics). Human nature responds not to the so-called spirit that is said to be in all of us, but to the environment. It will respond favourably to a favourable environment, as it is doing according to Eddy in Soviet Russia.

When the environment encourages, nay, demands, as a matter of fulfilment of its laws, the exploitation of man by man, it is too much to expect that moral precept will do more than touch the heart of a stray individual or so. It cannot transform society.

The socialist wants, therefore, first to change the social environment and acquire full power over the State in order to be in possession of the means of propaganda and education. He creates the predisposing environment and then uses systematic methods of education. How does he change the environment? By organising the exploited and oppressed for the overthrow of the established order and the seizure of power. Then he proceeds to build a new society on the new foundations,

There remain a number of minor points in the interview to be considered. It would serve no purpose, and would only detract attention from the central problem, to deal with all of them. Some, however, may be considered with profit.

LEADERSHIP OR TAILISM

Gandhiji says: " But I am quite clear that if a strictly honest and unchallengable referendum of our millions were to be taken, they would not vote for a wholesale expropriation of the propertied classes". Supposing that were so, what value will that opinion have for a social scientist, for one who is trying to get a scientific understanding of present society and preparing a scheme for such a social organisation from which the present evils would be parmanently banished. What value would he attach to the opinion of backward, ignorant, oppressed masses ? Does not Gandhiji know that till the other day large sections of the British working class were voting Conservative ? In America the workers still vote in overwhelming proportions for the candidates of the Republican and Democratic Parties (which are patently controlled by the upper classes) rather than for Norman Thomas (Socialist) or Wm. Z. Foster (Communist). Should we on that account accept the opinion of these workers as representing what is in their best interests ?

Are there not hundreds of thousands of untouchables in India who would consider it a sacrilege to touch the food of a Brahmin even when invited to do so ? Are

there not women in Bihar and the U. P. who would denounce the anti-*purdah* movement as immoral ?

What the masses vote or do not vote for is not important — their opinion depends wholly on the extent to which they have been made conscious of their rights and potentialities. All the problems of society would have disappeared immediately if the masses really knew what was good for them.

In Russia there was a group of intellectuals known as the 'Economists' who also believed that the workers were already conscious of what they wanted; and therefore the task of leadership was only to help them in the realization of those desires without attempting to add anything to them or to put them in a scientific shape Lenin wrote a smashing criticism of their view, which he termed "tailism" (following at the tail end), in a famous pamphlet, *What is to be done.* In that pamphlet Lenin made it clear that it was the task of the revolutionary intellectual to develop a programme for the masses and lead them to its realization. Socialism was a product not of the working class but of "individual members of the bourgeois intelligentsia" who addressed themselves to the problems created by capitalism and brought a clear head and a sincere heart to their task. In Lenin's own words: "The history of all countries testifies to the fact that by its own efforts the working class can only evolve a trade unionist consciousness,— that is, the conviction that it is necessary to coalesce into unions in order to fight the employees, to demand of the

Government laws in favour of labour, etc. *The doctrine of Socialism grew up out of the philosophical, historical, economic theories that were elaborated by educated members of the propertied classes, by the intelligentsia".*

Referendum is a poor and untrustworthy tool in the hands of the social architect.

NATIONALIZATION

"Once you turn a new leaf in the relations between the zamindars and the ryots, you will find us on our side jealously guarding your private rights and property. When I say 'us', I have Pandit Jawaharlal also in mind, for I am sure that on this essential principle of non-violence there is no difference between us. He does indeed talk of nationalization of property, but it need not frighten you. The nation cannot own property excepting by vesting it in individuals. It simply insures its just and equitable use and prevents all possible misuse and I do not think you can have any possible objection to holding your property for the benefit of the ryots".

I confess that in recent years I have read few things that have caused me so much surprise as this statement. Such a curious mix-up of ideas and issues it has rarely been my luck to come across. It is not my purpose to offer any explanation on behalf of Pandit Jawaharlal. I have no doubt that when he is free he will make his position clear to Gandhiji and the zamindars. I must, however, point out that when Gandhiji made this statement, *Whither India* and the other writings connected with it

had already appeared, so I cannot see how any body who had read them could have made these remarks about their author.

Gandhiji assumes that, because there is agreement between Jawaharlal and him on non-violence, the latter would jealously guard the private rights and properties of the zamindars. In "Some Criticisms Considered", Pandit Jawaharlal made it clear while discussing non-violence that for him the method was of secondary importance. "However important the method may be I entirely fail to understand how it can take the place of the objective. It is essential to have the objective and know the direction before a single step can be taken". As for the method itself, i.e., non-violence, he makes it clear that he has accepted it only as a weapon in the struggle against imperialism. There too he does not consider it to be infallible. "But I have made it clear on many occasions that non-violence is no infallible creed with me and although I greatly prefer it to violence I prefer freedom with violence to subjection with non-violence".* In the relation in which Gandhiji is using the term, i.e., a method for adjustment of group interests within the nation after *swaraj*, it seems to me that Jawaharlal leaves no doubt that he will not hesitate to use the coercive arm of the State. "The question of violence or non-violence may arise, and indeed is bound to arise, in another form after the conquest of the State power. There may be attempts to upset the new form of Government by reactionary groups. Will 'G' (one of the

* *Recent Essays and Writings*, p. 33.

critics of *Whither India*—J. P. N) advise the new government to use the resources of the State to coerce these elements into submission or does he think that the religious and philanthropic argument should be used to convert them ? Then again the new Government may pass laws which, carrying out the will of the great majority of the people, seek to de-vest privileged groups. Will 'G' then advise these groups to submit to the majority opinion or to resist; and if the latter, how should their resistence be met ?"*

Whatever may be 'G's' answer, Jawaharlal's seems to be obvious.

In face of such statements—and the *Recent Essays and Writings* is full of them—what warrant Gandhiji had to bracket Jawaharlal with himself in this matter it is difficult to understand.

It is Gandhiji's remarks about nationalization, however, that take the prize. Jawaharlal talks of nationalization but no one need be frightened; the nation cannot own property without vesting it in individuals. Is it possible that Gandhiji really believes in this arrant nonsense ? Even the veriest tyro in modern enonomics knows what nationalization means. Will Gandhiji tell us in whom is the ownership of the State Railways vested ? Who owns the nationalized mines, banks and factories of Soviet Russia ?

Gandhiji seems to confuse property which is for

* *opt cit.* pp. 35-36.

individual consumption with property which is used for producing property of the former kind. If Gandhiji means that the nation cannot own houses, clothes, cycles, gramophones, tables, chairs, except through individual ownership, no one will quarrel with him. Nationalization of property did never mean that individuals will not have their own houses, clothes, etc.

When the socialist talks of nationalization of property, he means functional property, viz., land, mines, factories. Not only is there no difficulty about the nation owning such property but to vest their ownership in individuals is unjust, unreasonable and unscientific. They are large institutions with which are bound up the interests of the whole community; and so the community must own them.

That will mean that servants of the Community will work these institutions, as they are doing in Soviet Russia; and their proceeds would be shared by the whole community according to some agreed scheme.

SOCIALISM THROUGH KHADI

In the interview that we have just considered, Gandhiji defined his indigenous Socialism as co-ordination and co-operation between capital and labour, landlord and tenant. There is also another type of Gandhian "Socialism,"— though it did not find a mention in the interview. It has for its central doctrine the idea that we should eschew machinery, and in its place develop cottage industries. The arguments against machinery are varied,

the chief of which are that it leads to violence and exploitation and creates unemployment, particularly in a country with such a large population as India.

The criticism that machinery means violence and exploitation is not so much a criticism of machinery itself, as that of the system which uses machinery for private profit, i. e, of capitalism. Some people believe that machinery makes capitalism inevitable. Soviet Russia clearly disproves this. There we find a social order rising literally on the foundations of machinery and yet being as free from exploitation as any society of idyllic fancy. There is violence indeed in Soviet Russia, but it is not engendered by the new economic order. It is revolutionary violence—political violence, if you please—made necessary by the task of destroying the old order of privilege, exploitation and violence.*

The argument about unemployment is a persistent fallacy in this country. It needs, therefore, to be examined in some detail.

It is commonly believed by those who are opposed to machinery that it causes unemployment. "If we installed a machine," they argue, "which does the work of ten labourers, it would displace that many people from employment." It does that, no doubt, but it is forgotten that at the same time it does much more—it creates new employments, new demands, new standards of living.

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* For a detailed treatment of this question see the author's article on "Professor Kumarappa's thesis of Centralization vs. Decentralization" in *India and Socialism* to be published shortly.

Let us take a country like the United States of America. When the Thirteen Colonies rebelled and won their independence, the level of production was very low and so was their population. Now, according to the above hypothesis, as the country began to be mechanized, unemployment should have grown in a corresponding proportion. Nothing of the sort actually happened. It may be urged that foreign markets and imperialism kept the American workers employed at home But this too was not true in fact. Till the war, the export of American manufactures was next to nothing Even during the period of the post-war boom, I believe, not more than ten per cent of the total American manufactures was exported. The reason why there was no unemployment in the U.S.A , on the scale that should have been expected on the hypothesis of the anti-machinist, was that, for various causes, the standard of living of the American workers and farmers went on ascending, as compared with other capitalist countries. That made it possible for most of the American manufactures to be consumed at home.

This is not to say that there was no unemployment in the U. S. A. Unemployment there was indeed, but it was periodic and was not due to mechanization and in proportion to it. Its cause was different which I shall consider below. What the American experience does show is that *if the purchasing power of the people goes on rising proportionately to production, no amount of mechanization will produce unemployment, unless production has crossed the saturation point of human needs*—a very distant point at present.

Let us take another country. Soviet Russia believes in machinery more than the Americans ever did. The Russians are mechanizing both industry and agriculture at a pace that has staggered every one. Yet, from all accounts, Russia is the only country where there is no unemployment at a time when in the rest of the civilized world it has become the foremost social problem. How will the anti-machinists explain this ?

The answer will be found in the origins of unemployment under capitalism. What do we find there ? We find that production has been curtailed ruthlessly; factories are lying idle; credit is frozen; warehouses are glutted. At the same time we find people who are in dire need of all the things that are locked up in warehouses or are wantonly destroyed by the State and the capitalists. On the one hand, there is said to be over-production; on the other, an appalling under-consumption.

Can there be anything more contradictory of each other than this ? Yet it is one of the most persistent characteristics of capitalism. It is clear that in a world where the vast majority of people lives in dire need there can be no over-production. All that can be produced today, and a thousand times more, can be consumed without any difficulty. But, then, where is the rub ? The rub is in the fact that the poverty of the people, their lack of purchasing power, does not allow them to buy the goods that are lying idle or being dumped into the sea or thrown into the bonfire. The purchasing

power of the great majority of the people in capitalist countries comes from the wages they receive; and the latter are kept down as low as possible by the capitalists so that their profits may be the highest possible. Thus a vicious circle is drawn. The capitalist goes on manufacturing goods so that by selling them he may draw his profit, at the same time he restricts the consuming power of the community by his policy of wages. Naturally, there is maladjustment between production and consumption; and he periodically finds that he has produced "too much". Then he restricts production and throws his workers out of employment.

Now, it should be clear that if goods were produced for consumption and not for the profit of a few, all that was produced would be consumed. There would be no limit to the purchasing power of the people except the supply of goods itself, because "wages" would represent under those conditions the sum total of consumption goods produced. Over-production would arise only when the needs of the community have been satisfied, and these, as I have already indicated, are almost insatiable. Restriction of production and demechanization would not be necessary till that point has been reached.

In India that point will take a very long time indeed to reach. Imagine a well-kept upper middle-class household: a smart house with a neat little garden; furniture; rugs and carpets; electricity; a radio-set; perhaps a Chevrolet; a modest library; music; wholesome and

nourishing food; good clothes; enough leisure for recreation, reading and writing. Now, consider that you have to raise the standard of the poorest Indian home to this level. Will you kindly compute how may times our productive resources must be multiplied to make that possible in the course of, let us say, fifty years ?

To run away from machinery, to take shelter in small industries, is again a symptom of the disease we considered above — the fear of facing the issue. The examination of present society must be avoided to avoid inconvenient conclusions. It is less troublesome to take recourse to sentimentality and idyllic fancies. Therefore, instead of tracing the real offender, the guilt is readily fastened on poor inoffensive objects of steel and mortar, which, in reality, are a blessing for mankind.

So much for the theoretical position of the anti-machinist. His position from the point of view of practice is still worse. The fact that machinery slowly displaced handicrafts all over the world must have had good reasons for it. The reasons, in fact, were excellent, viz., that machinery makes a higher return of proflits possible and holds all the points of vantage in the game of economic competition with small scale production.

These reasons still hold good. Those who have capital to invest cannot eschew machinery. On the other hand, handicrafts have no chance against modern industry. We see in India too that, in spite of the blighting influences of imperialism, there is a steady progress in machine production. As soon as the imperialist obstruc-

tion is out of the way, there will be an absolute fever of mechanization, though, I should add parenthetically that under capitalism the prospects of mechanization or industrialization are very limited in India. Just consider the Sugar Rush. The Government made a gesture of goodwill to the Indian capitalist and created an opportunity for him to pile up huge profits by levying a sugar tariff. At once mills went up literally like mushrooms. No amount of counter-propaganda in favour of hand-made *gur* could have stopped that avalanche.

How, in face of these economic tendencies, is the gospel of small industries to spread ? There is no enlightenment from the quarter to which one naturally turns for an answer. There is only a mouthful of sentimentality.

As I pointed out in Chapter I, unless dictatorial methods are used, it would neither be possible to demechanize present production nor prevent its future mechanization In existing society it is not possible for the small producer to acquire such dictatorial powers. His is not a key position as that of the capitalist on the one hand and the worker on the other. He is not even in the position of the peasant, who in the conditions of India has a unique importance. If, however, there are idealists who imagine that they would succeed in this task, I shall only ask them if it is common sense deliberately to destroy the productive powers of society when only a better control over them would yield all the moral and material values they dream of creating ?

To conclude. Gandhism may be a well-intentioned doctrine I personally think it is. But even with the best of intentions, it is, I must admit—it gives me no pleasure to do so—a dangerous doctrine. It is dangerous because it hushes up real issues and sets out to remove the evils of society by pious wishes. It thus deceives the masses and encourages the upper classes to continue their domination.

MANU VS. MARX

There is perhaps no Indian scholar today who is more competent to interpret ancient India to us than Doctor Bhagavan Das. It was natural, therefore, that I should have turned with avidity to his ancient Scientific Socialism.*

The greater part of the Doctor's book is taken up with criticisms of Marxism, Russia, Fascism, etc. It is not my purpose here to reply to these. Much of his criticism follows the liberal bourgeois line. With some of it, communists will heartily agree. No communist has ever claimed that a faultless society has been created in Russia or that mistakes have not been committed.

The Doctor, in my humble opinion, has misunderstood some of the basic ideas of Marxism, viz., the materialist interpretation of history, the theory of the State, the classless society. To give just one instance : Commenting upon Lenin's remark that talents are not born by the

* See his *Ancient vs. Modern Scientific Socialism*. Theosophical Publishing House, Madras.

hundred, he says "Why, on the 'materialist interpretation of history', is talent born only by the ten (scarcely even that) and not by the hundred ? Why are there 'exceptional individuals' ?" It is surprising that the Doctor did not go on to ask why, if the materialistic interpretation of history is correct, are the Himalayas taller than the Vindhyas. And, yet, differences in the talents of men have as little to do with historical materialism as the difference in the height of these mountains Just as it was possible for physical forces to produce the latter difference so it was possible for them to produce the former. Why are there exceptional individuals, is a question which biology can answer and not history—no matter which interpretrtion of history one accepts. Matter in its infinite combinations produces the peach and the dogberry, the tulip and the dandelion; in the same manner it produces an Einstein and an Ivan the Fool.

In the same context the Doctor goes on to ask: "Is *self*-sacrifice materialist, rationalist, or is it mystical, theosophical ?" It is a pity that the adjective 'materialist' should have given rise to so much misunderstanding. The misunderstanding is due to two different uses of the word — one popular, the other philosophical. Marxian critical literature is strewn with remarks to the effect that historical materialism denies that man possesses finer, spiritual, idealistic qualities of nature; that it asserts that "mankind progresses only on its belly", as Malinowski puts it; and so on. Historical materialism does nothing of the sort, however. That there is a type of human behaviour which involves self-sacrifice, self-denial, service and

suffering, the Marxist is not so blind as to deny. The wonder is that critics take him to be so devoid of sight as not to see what is a common phenomenon. But what the Marxist does say is that when a man is behaving in a self-sacrificing manner, in a manner that would be termed spiritual, mystical, theosophical, he is doing so, like others, because of given *bio-social * influences.* Human behaviour according to the Marxist (as to the modern behaviourists) is a compound of biological (nervous, muscular, glandular structure) and social (home, education, association, etc.) influences. Merely because, in current language, a certain type of behaviour has been named spiritual, it does not mean that it is independent of these two influences — which in the scientific sense of the term are "material". When we speak of "spiritual" behaviour, we do no more than describe a certain type of human conduct. The term is descriptive and not explanatory. To a Marxist, spiritual behaviour too, like all other behaviour, has a material (in the sense of not non-material) explanation — concretely, a bio-social explanation.

We could examine many other criticisms made by the learned Doctor. But that would take us too far away from the main enquiry. We must return to his ancient Socialism.

THE PROBLEM

It is a matter of satisfaction that the problem as formulated by Dr. Das is such that a socialist will find

* I am indebted to my professor, Dr. Albert Weiss, for these categories. See his *A Theoretical Basis of Human Behavior.*

himself in substantial agreement with it. He puts it in these terms: "It is necessary to work out a fresh *Technique*, a modified old or a wholly new *Scheme of Social Organization*, a scheme of administration of all the affairs of the *individual* as well as the *collective* human life. This Technique must be such as would make it *possible* for the Golden Rule to become objectively and actually operative, as would make Universal Brotherhood *practicable*, would make it *feasible* to change Society, under the existing industrial, mechanical and urban conditions (assuming, as we must, that they cannot be wholly abolished so as to leave behind only pastoral, agricultural and rural ones) from its present basis of grossly iniquitous and excessively individualist capitalism, and the subservient militarism and imperialism, to the basis of a really *equitable* (not any impossible *equal* or *exactly similar*) *sharing*, by all and each, in the world's work as well as the world's good things, its necessaries, comforts, luxuries and enjoyments." (p. 6)

THE SOLUTION

What is the technique that will do all this ? We read: "Manu has given us such a technique in his permanent (and not merely five-year or ten-year or twenty-five-year) Plan of the Individual Life and the Social Life in combination, for the whole of the Human Race. In that Plan are included the fundamental Principles of Planned Education, Planned Family-Life, Planned Economy, Planned Defence-Sanitation-Judication,

and Planned Religion-Recreation-Art." (pp. 6-7) "The ancient Indian Scheme of Social Organization endeavours", we read further, "to effect just the desiderated compromise between unlimited competition and enforced co-operation, egoism and altruism, individualism and socialism, all-liberty and no-liberty, only private enterprise and only state-management, too little government and too much government, King Log and King Stork. *It does this by means of the definition and the partition of the rights and duties of each individual, as an Individual in the successive stages of life (Ashrama-dharma), and as an adult Member of Society, a Social, during the stage of the Family-life as Householder (Varna-dharma)* (my italics). The rights and duties, work and enjoyment (of appropriate rewards), are so partitioned that genuine *equitability* is achieved, (or even equality, *sama-ta,* but more in *psychological* and *spiritual* sense than in the *economic* sense of the Communist).* (pp. 31—32).

The scheme is further elaborated as below: "It follows from the traditional Indian principles that there should be four main 'guilds' or 'trusts' or 'artels' or 'corporations' or 'organisations' or 'trade-unions' in each state; one, of the learned professions; another, of the executive professions; a third, of the wealth-making-and-managing professions; a fourth of the laboring profession. Provision is also made by those principles for co-ordinating the activities of all four and unifying the whole state

* No communist claims that he will establish economic *equality.* The communist ideal is rather the fulfilment of needs: "from each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs."

under a supreme Legislature composed of elected functional representatives of all four, with special *ethical* and intellectual qualifications, and a supreme Executive head *subordinate* to the Legislature. This co-ordination is made in such a manner that the wisdom of the first shall principally make the laws and guide the defensive valour and the law-enforcing compulsive power of the *second*, so that the work of the *third* for supplying all the needs of all may prosper, and the *fourth* may be kept happy and enabled to help all." (p. 69).

Here is the kernel of Dr. Das' ancient Socialism.* He pictures a society, well-ordered, balanced, rational and happy. His scheme is simple enough: the division of society into four, functionally correlated, professions in the manner of *Manu*, viz., the learned, executive, wealth-making-and managing and labouring professions. The duties, obligations, rights and privileges of these groups are to be defined. The supreme legislative power is to be vested in the learned profession.

There are various points of detail which the Doctor gives concerning the economic and political features of his scheme. For instance, he elaborates a scale for the distribution of wealth in the following manner: the minimum wage for unskilled labour (in regions such as the U. P.), Rs. 10 per month; the maximum for skilled labour, ten times as much; for the learned professions, twenty-five times; for the executive, hundred times; for the wealth-making, five hundred to one thousand times. He further suggests a very much simplified schedule of taxation, with its incidence varying with the different professions. He also advocates social control of interest and profit. He says: "The Ancient Socialism suggests that rates of interest and proportions of profits to investments should be fixed also between lower and higher limits, and

Two criticisms immediately come to one's mind. Firstly, is not this division arbitrary and somewhat out of date ? It will be difficult always to maintain a distinction between the learned and executive professions. The higher executive positions, in a modern and rational society, are likely to be filled up by men of the learned profession. On the other hand, the lower executive offices may be grouped together with the labouring professions. The wealth-making profession is likely to disappear and its functions to be merged into those of the executive and labouring professions. As a matter of fact, it is a mistake to call the class of merchants, industrialists bankers etc., a wealth-making class. Wealth, as I have shown above, is really made by the labouring classes. The so-called wealth-making-and-managing class 'makes' no wealth in reality and even manages it only in such a manner as to draw as large a profit for itself as possible. In any reasonable society, this wealth-making class is bound to merge in the administrative and executive profession.

The Doctor's division seems to be far from perfect.

that trade in certain 'necessaries' should be so restricted and supervised, and prices of them so fixed, as to make 'cornering' and 'speculation' in them, to the distress of the general public, impossible."

In the political sphere he suggests a hierarchy of legislative bodies beginning with the *gram panchayat* and ending with a supreme legislature. The primary body is to be elected directly while all the higher bodies are to be elected indirectly much as is done in Soviet Russia. The Doctor prescribes various qualifications for membership of these bodies, particularly of the supreme legislature.

It is obvious, however, that any society, much more so the complicated societies of the present, must be divided into various, more or less, distinct occupations. What is not equally obvious, and this is the other and more important criticism, is: how merely a division of society into four or any number of professions can solve the problem which faces present society and which is the starting point of Dr. Das' ancient Socialism—the problem of exploitation and gross economic inequality.

First of all, it should be pointed out that no society is divided artificially, i. e., according to *a priori* theories of social thinkers. Social division is an organic process of society. Marx showed that its *primary* source lay in the manner in which men earned their livelihood. It is quite possible that at a given stage of civilization and, in order to fortify that particular civilization, the existing social divisions, that have sprung up naturally, are systematised, codified and intellectualized. Manu, or the intellectual efforts whose consummation he personifies, perhaps, represented just such an attempt at codification.

It seems to me that, by placing a scheme of social division before us, as a solution of the problems of modern society, Dr. Bhagavan Das has placed the cart before the horse. He rightly finds fault with the present divisions of society. But in trying to replace them by another, may be an ideal, division he has begged the whole question. Before suggesting an alternative scheme he should have paused to consider *why present society is so divided.* The present divisions, either in India or abroad, have not

been superimposed from the outside: they have grown up *naturally* from their respective social soils. If we would have a different sort of division, we must prepare the necessary soil.

Here lies the superiority of the socialist's method. He points out that as long as the means of livelihood and of production of goods are in private hands, there is bound to be exploitation and the present unjust division of society into master and slave, rich and poor, powerful and weak. If we leave the first untouched, the latter is bound to appear — no matter in what disguise. If the basis of the economic organization is set right, the rest, including social division, would automatically right itself.

I recognise that the learned Doctor may not accept this principle. He might say that it is possible to impose on society, from without, a scheme of social organization so that it transforms, in time, even its very basis. That is, he might suggest a cure not from the roots upwards but from the branches downwards. Theoretically, it is possible to conceive of such a course of treatment. But I doubt whether the patient will feel the least relieved.

It is true that the Doctor does not content himself only with the division of society into professions; he apportions at the same time, duties, obligations, etc., to them. This may be thought to solve the problem. But apportioning duties is the least part of the job. The greater part is, firstly, to *put* people into the various divisions and, secondly, to *make them conform* to the

codes prescribed for them. It is on this rock, I am afraid, that the Doctor's ship splits.

Let us examine the question a little more closely. We have on one side a society that is divided into classes of exploiters and exploited, rich and poor, strong and weak, master and servant. The class of masters is very small, while the underdogs run into millions. We find furthermore that this iniquitous society, is maintained with violence and coercion. The State in all its panoply of power — its legal apparatus, its police and army — stands guard to protect and nourish this injustice.

On the other side, we have Dr. Bhagavan Das with a plan to literally churn up this whole society — to redistribute wealth, power, privilege, duties and occupations. How does the Doctor propose to carry out his plan ? A scheme, which does not suit the ruling class in society — and the Doctor's is eminently unsuited to it -- has only two chances of success: either it must find proponents strong enough to impose it on society, or it must somehow persuade the entrenched interests to accept it. No scheme. hallowed even though it may be with such a name as *Manu*, can succeed unless it does one of these two things.

I have indicated above that the socialist relies for the fulfilment of his scheme on finding in the exploited classes of society, particularly in the working class, proponents of the required strength and outlook. He relies, in other words, on the forces of class struggle in society, and endeavours to organize the oppressed and exploited for the destruction of the present basis of

society and the creation of a new one, whereupon he will build the new society.

Dr. Das, however, like Mahatma Gandhi, relies entirely on the method of persuasion. He has elaborated a scheme for this purpose, which he has linked up with the revered name: *Manu*. He writes : ' The only means seems to be to create a permanent 'class' of persons, from whom primarily good and wise legislators and secondarily trustworthy rulers could be drawn, and who could have sufficient honored recognition amidst and influence over the general public to be *able to check effectively* the aberrations of persons in official authority. ......Manu founds his Technique of Social Organization, and builds the whole superstructure thereof, expressly upon such a class of Brahmans, 'missionaries of Brahma' (by *Karma* and not by *Janma*)" (pp. 151-52). We read again: "If the system of Ashramas is revived properly, and persons begin to retire, as a rule, soon after completing their fiftieth year, from the life of 'the household' and competitive bread-winning, among any people, then that people will automatically begin to have a sufficient number of persons in the third stage of life, *vana-sth*, who would be sages worthy of all trust and reverence fitted to make good laws, and able to guide and control the Executive by their moral force and influence" (pp 152-53) Further on: " The men and women, all over the world, who are devoted to the worship of the Divinity of Wisdom, Science, Learning, and are engaged in that noblest of all vocations, the vocation of teaching, of implanting right knowledge and

developing righteous character and building up strong body in the younger generation, have only to add to their achievement and their work, their *vidya*, their *ilm*, the virtue of *tapasya*, *zohd*, resolute public spirit and philanthropy, and the holiness of asceticism and its insepe-rable will-power, its moral force, its spiritual all-subdu-ing energy. As soon as they do so, the disease of the world would be cured — in a single day; the devils of greed, pride, lust, vice, would all be exorcised at once, and would take flight in fear and trembling from the hearts of the rulers, who would then become true public servants;......" (pp. 153-54).

It is refreshing to look at the inspired vision of the learned Doctor. But is not the onlooker likely to comment that there is a deep shadow of unreality over the whole thing ? In a world where the universities turn out job-hungry youths, where society is governed by self - and class-interest, where the State is a conscious instrument of class rule, where senility is yoked to self-seeking with the aid of monkey-glands, the vision of Dr. Das seems too unreal and foreign indeed.

However, to continue the description of Dr. Das' scheme. In order to produce the type of leaders he has described, he suggests a school of occult studies. Writing in his book under the caption, "Wanted—A Real School of Yoga" he says : "Persons who have the needed ethical, intellectual, physical, superphysical qualifications, who are real practical yogis along any of the recognised lines of the 'right-hand' path should be

sought for and invited to Lodges of the T. S. (Theosophical Society—J. P. N.) or the E. S. (Eastern School of the T. S.—J. P. N.), on their own conditions, as far as possible, to act as guides to the others; moral, mental, and physical qualifications and tests may be prescribed for those who seek guidance and are prepared to run risks; one of the qnalifications may perhaps be freedom from family ties or at least dependents; scientific methods should be adopted for demonstration and experiment; faith should not be asked for if proof cannot be given. If such a school of occult studies succeeds in producing the right kind of *alumni*, missionaries of the supreme spirit in heart and mind, even though they may not have succeeded in developing any superphysical faculties...., then indeed the world would be set on the right path of peace, progress, prosperity, material and spiritual happiness, by their moral and spiritual influence and their active labours for the good of mankind." (pp. 155-56).

Dr. Das suggests a "school of yoga" as an alternative to class struggle. Mr. H.G. Wells offered Stalin the P.E.N. Club as his alternative. These are two thought processes in two distant parts of the world; and yet they are impelled by identical social forces: the desire of the middle classes to reform the world, in accordance with middle class aspirations, without endangering their social and economic position.

However, to return to the school of yoga. In my humble opinion, the very assumption on which the idea of this school is based is wrong. Dr. Das obviously

thinks that the world is in this terrible mess because it lacks men of the type which he has called "missionaries of Brahma"; or, conversely, that the disease of the world would be cured—even in a single day—if such men were somehow created in sufficient numbers. This assumption, to my mind, again puts the cart before the horse. It is more correct to say that there are no "missionaries of Brahma" in the present world because it is dominated by capitalism and imperialism than to say that it is because there are no "missionaries of Brahma" that the world is dominated by these iniquitous systems. The present capitalist society has set its own standards and produces and values a different type of man. Its heroes are Fords and Monds; Lindbergs and Hansens, Hoares and Hitlers, Hindenburgs, even Einsteins—but not missionaries of Brahma. The latter are not likely to arise as long as capitalism is in existence.

It is different with "missionaries of Socialism," Capitalism itself produces them. The class struggle that is set up in capitalist society is just the soil in which Socialism takes root and grows. A glance at present society will show adequate proofs of this. The socialists —in using this term I am not excluding communists—constitute the largest political party in the world in opposition to the established order. I shall not hazard an estimate of the number of missionaries of Brahma, engaged in social planning. It is true that in India the number of socialists is very small. But here the forces that create Socialism are themselves of very recent origin. There is no doubt that in India too the socialists will

constitute by far the largest group of those who have any conception of social reconstruction.

But let us suppose that the Lodges of the T. S. or such other occult bodies do succeed in creating enough missionaries of Brahma. What guarentee is there that they will be effective ? Will they be able, for instance, to re-divide society; to redistribute wealth, power, occupations ? It requires an immeasurable faith in occultism to answer the question in the affirmative.

In conclusion I might add that it takes one's breath away to consider the serenity with which this scheme has been conceived. Here is our world, crumbling, tearing, madly rushing on to ruin; here are millions starving, tortured, unemployed; here are rapacious capitalism and imperialism forging new tools of oppression and exploitation, piling up armaments, eating up colonies, gambling away with the lives of millions — and here is this philosopher, calmly thinking of a school of yoga !

Fascism

No one having the least understanding of the forces that are at work in the modern world will for a moment think of Fascism as an alternative to Socialism. Fascism is, in fact, just the opposite of Socialism — its most relentless enemy.

Fascism represents the period of capitalist decay — the period in which capitalism attempts to sustain itself

at any cost. The economic crisis which it has to face as a result of its own chaotic laws and the political danger it has to meet on account of the rising strength of the working class have driven it to overthrow democracy, which so far served as a convenient tool but does not give it the concentrated and unchallenged power that it now requires, and to deliberately destroy the culture that it had built up in the days of its effulgence. To the ruling class Fascism may be an alternative to Socialism — even though a temporary and ineffective one — but to those who are seeking means to serve the masses and to establish a swaraj for them, as I assume the self - sacrificing Congress worker is doing, Fascism must ever remain the most dangerous enemy, to be given no quarter whatever.

The opposition of Fascism to the interests of the masses is so clear that I would not have troubled to consider it here, had it not been for the reason that certain prominent Congressmen have spoken approvingly of it and have even talked of a synthesis of Fascism and Socialism! To speak of such a synthesis is not only absurd but also most dangerous. Certain superficial "similarities", between Fascism and Socialism, such as "dictatorship", have encouraged this idea of synthesis. The "similarities" are very deceptive, however. The rule of industrialists and bankers under the cover of fascist dictatorship is very different from the rule of the workers and peasants. The former exists solely for the purpose of exploiting the workers and peasants whereas the latter exists for the destruction of that

exploitation. There can be no manner of comparison between the two.

When we look at Fascism and Socialism we must not confine our view to their outward forms but must penetrate within and look at their foundations. The foundation of Fascism is capitalist greed and exploitation, the foundation of Socialism is the emancipation of the masses from that greed and exploitation. One is the enemy of the other. There can be no synthesis of the two.

I would be going too far away from my subject matter if I were to launch upon a detailed analysis of Fascism. It is enough to have sounded a warning. I should like, however, to make a suggestion to those who are interested in following the matter further. A number of valuable works are available on the subject; but I know of no abler analysis of Fascism than that made by R. Palme Dutt in his *Fascism and Social Revolution.* Mr. Dutt is perhaps the ablest Marxist writing in the English language, and his *Fascism,* to my mind, is as important a study of the present disintegrating phase of capitalism as Lenin's *Imperialism* was of the phase that culminated in the Great War. The book will undoubtedly have a niche close to that of *Imperialism* in the temple of Marxism.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The time of surprise attacks and revolutions, carried through by small conscious minorities at the head of unconscious masses, is past. When it is a question of a complete transformation of the social organisation, the masses themselves must also be in it, must themselves already have grasped what is at stake, what they are going in for......... The history of the last fifty years has taught us that. But, in order that the masses may understand what is to be done, long persistent work is required, and it is just this work which we are now pursuing, and with a success which drives the enemy to despair.

Friedrich Engels.

The Hindustan Times delivered itself of the following homily the other day: "It is the incubus of foreign domination that is petrifying all progress, and stunting our national life. Let the nation once get rid of it and then the socialists will have enough time and opportunity to preach their doctrines, if the public are prepared to listen to them. It is not patriotism to divide the country in the face of common peril."

The Hindustan Times is the voice of Indian capital and is therefore fully entitled to teach us patriotism.

National patriotism has been the peculiar weakness of capitalists. In fact, the very rise of nations was coeval with the origin of capitalism. The period of capitalist ascendency has been *par excellence* a period of nationalism. The cry of "the nation in danger" has been the strongest bulwark of capitalism. The 1931 British General Election was a classic example of this.

I have shown in the previous chapters that Socialism is the only and inescapable solution of the problems of present society. I have also shown that before we can undertake a socialist reconstruction of society we must have full power over the State. It is possible to argue from this, as in fact it is argued, that it is purposeless to talk of Socialism till we have won *swaraj*. Nay, there are people, like the editor of *The Hindustan Times*, who do not consider it only purposeless but also positively mischievous. In their view, the struggle for *swaraj* demands national unity, and Socialism is a doctrine which destroys that unity. Therefore a socialist agitation at this stage will weaken the national forces--so they think. This feeling is so widespread that it deserves to be carefully examined.

National Unity

What is national unity ? What is a nation ? What is nationalism ?

Let us compare two notable events of our national history: 1857 and 1885*. There were only twenty-eight

* 1857 was the year of the so-called "Sepoy Mutiny" and 1885 was the birth-year of the Indian National Congress.

years that separated those two events. Yet they wrought an incredible change in "national" outlook. 1857 witnessed an open and armed struggle for sovereign power; 1885 an act of humble petitioning.

From a struggle for sovereign power to a prayer for a Royal Commission marks a great change. Yet, the latter has been called "the beginning of the formulation of India's demands."

If, however, both 1857 and 1885 represented national† movements, it is obvious that nationalism means different things at different times. The difference lies not only in its objectives but in its human content as well. In 1857 feudal chiefs and their soldiers were the "nationalists"; in 1885, seventy-two gentlemen extracted from the middle classes, including the cadre of retired government servants.

These facts throw a flood of light on the problem of nationalism and national unity. Neither the feudal chiefs who fought in 1857 nor the *baboos* who founded the Congress in 1885, comprised the whole nation and stood for all the classes and groups within it. It would have been comic for the peasants in 1885 to have "united" with the *baboos* in demanding "seats" in the councils and more jobs for the English-educated!

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†I have said above that nationalism in its modern sense is a recent development and grew with the nation-states of capitalism, Psychological equivalents of the nation, however, in the sense of political institutions being made the centre of the loyalties of masses of men, have always existed in history. Such were the loyalties of men to their kings and the devotion of the Greek to his city. I am using the word nationalism in this broad sense here.

(Perhaps it is not quite obvious even now that it is only slightly less comic today to expect the peasants to unite, again with the *baboos*, in fighting for an undefined *swaraj* and a mysterious thing called the Motherland.)

Thus we see that a " nation " does not in reality mean the whole nation, nor does nationalism comprise the interests of all the classes and groups within it. At different times different classes constitute the "nation" and give expression to nationalism. What class or group would play this role at a given time depends upon the circumstances of history and the structure of society. It may often happen that the so-called national interest of the moment is actually against the real interests of the majority of the people When the cry of "the nation in danger" was raised in the General Election of 1931 in Great Britain, the purpose in reality was to stampede the people into voting for the perpetuation of British capitalism, standing as it did for their exploitation and economic bondage. To talk, therefore, of the nation as something undivided and whole, is to become victim to class propaganda.

The Indian nation is made up of princes, industrialists, bankers, merchants, peasants, labourers, etc. Nationalism does not mean the same thing to all these classes. The freedom of one of them is not the same as the freedom of the other. Nor is the manner in which they would fight for freedom, the same for all.

Let us take the princes. Their freedom means complete sovereignty which can be won only on the battlefield. But which of the princes, since 1857, is in a

position to go to war for his sovereignty ? It is clear that the princes must permanently remain vassals of British imperialism. This naturally ranges them against the "national" movement in so far as it opposes that imperialism. Here is the first breach in national unity.

The landlords of India, as is well-known, are largely the creation of British imperialism. The bigger landlords have always solidly stood with imperialism and have been its strongest props in the countryside. Nationalism has no meaning to these people—except jobs in the higher services; and if any political power is to be given to Indians on account of nationalist forces gathering strength, then the balance of such power. They themselves are not interested in opposing or even agitating against imperialism. Their entry into politics is merely to ensure that their interests do not suffer on account of any power being "transferred" to Indian hands. No one with the least political understanding or experience can talk of unity with the landlords. Here is the second breach in national unity.

Let us take the industrialists next. Nationalism to them means complete freedom to exploit the country's resources (of men and materials) and to build up their fortunes, or, as it is euphemistically put, to develop the country. To do this they require a great deal of control over the State—leading ultimately to complete control. They would, no doubt, prefer complete control at once; but, since that is too risky to secure, they would be satisfied with gradual concessions of such control, i. e., with "reforms."

The Indian industrial class has grown up under the aegis of imperialism and is completely at its mercy economically and politically. It has no other foreign support, as the Irish bourgeoisie had in the U. S. A. In India itself its growth has not resulted in such benefits to the people, nor has it so made its influence felt on the economic or cultural life of the country, as to arouse and gather enthusiasm and support for itself. The result is the inability of this class to oppose imperialism. At best it can put pressure on it. But even this pressure it is unable to exert as a class. The only manner in which it can bring pressure to be exerted on imperialism is by inducing and surreptitiously helping other classes, with lesser stakes, to do so. This help, too, it will withdraw if the objective of the pressure is any other than to vest power in its hands. In other words, the industrialists are nationalists only in so far as nationalism aims at a bourgeois State. Nationalism will have no interest for them if its objective is any other than what is demanded by the interests of their class.

Thus we see, firstly, that the Indian industrialists are unable themselves to oppose imperialism; secondly, that they would be satisfied with facilities for economic development; and thirdly, they would support nationalism only when it aims at placing them in the seat of power. Here is the third breach in national unity.

Let us take the peasants now. India is a land of peasants. If Indian nationalism has any meaning, it should mean the freedom of the peasants. What is that

freedom ? Above all, it is freedom from exploitation, irrespective of whether that exploitation is carried on by a brown or a white skin. It is, further, the opportunity to shape the nation's economic and political policies in accordance with their own interests. In short, it is a peasant *raj*.

As for method of struggle, peasants have always known only one method — direct action. Such action, however, is as dangerous for the foreign oppressor as for the native. It is necessary, therefore, that in the interest of the latter, the peasants do not become conscious of their economic and political destiny. In other words, "national" unity breaks up as soon as the peasantry becomes conscious. Here is another breach in unity.

Likewise with the workers. The workers' freedom means freedom from wage-slavery by social ownership of means of production. Like the peasants, the workers' weapon too is direct action. And they too must not become class conscious, so that national unity may be maintained. A class-conscious working class means the break-up of national unity. Here is a further breach.

The above analysis has shown that there is no such thing as national unity which the socialists are trying to destroy. Nationalism does not mean the same thing to all the classes within the nation — it is not so simply expressed as the overthrow of the foreign incubus. Some classes in their very nature are *for* that incubus. Of those that are against, some are incapable of opposing it,

and those that are in a position to do so, have fundamental interests directly opposed to those of the first.

The analysis shows, further, that the national unity of which *The Hindustan Times* speaks, means in reality that the lower classes—the masses—should fight imperialism not to secure their own freedom from exploitation but to enthrone the bourgeoisie and the landed magnates, who themselves do not participate in that fight, in the place of the imperial power. This unity can be maintained only at the cost of mass consciousness.

I grant that it is debatable whether this is not in the interests of the masses themselves. We shall take up this question in the next section. Here let us clearly understand what this magical, but highly deceptive, phrase, "national unity", really means.

United Front With the Bourgeoisie

I said above that it was debatable whether it was not in the interests of the masses themselves to remain unconscious, for the present, of their rights and destiny; and to fight imperialism merely to replace it with the vested interests of the country. It is so only if one believes that the united front of the masses and the bourgeoisie (including the landed interests) would lead to a surer and speedier defeat of imperialism. "In that case", it may be asked, "would not the defeat of imperialism be in itself of sufficient value to the masses to justify their having fought for the establishment of bourgeois

democracy ? After that they could have a second revolution if they so desired."

This point of view is typical of the mental attitude of the average Congress worker. It, therefore, deserves a careful examination.

Socialist though I am, I have not the least hesitation in saying that, were the consummation above envisaged possible, I should work for it willingly, though I should like to ensure at the same time that the second revolution followed the first as quickly as possible. The defeat of imperialism on such a broad sector as India, would have been of sufficient value to induce me work out that policy. But as circumstances obtain, it turns out to be a sterile policy—leading not to the defeat of imperialism but to a series of weak-kneed compromises with it.

These circumstances, briefly, are that the Indian bourgeoisie is not in a position to play a revolutionary role. I wrote in the last section, of its close ties with and dependence upon imperialism. This dependence and these ties completely destroy its revolutionary character and prevent it from becoming anti-imperialist. A section of it is, indeed, so dependent upon imperialism that, far from opposing, it wishes to perpetuate it. This is the section which performs the task of the middleman of imperialism. The other section which would like to be rid of imperialism –the industrial bourgeoisie—is too afraid to oppose it directly. As for the landlords, I have already indicated their relationship with imperialism and their consequent pro-imperialist role.

This position of the Indian bourgeoisie makes any united front of the masses with it absolutely barren. Firstly, because the alliance on the side of the bourgeoisie means very little. It is able to contribute very little to the struggle—even though the latter is merely demonstrative. Let us take an example of its ineffectiveness. The most important part of the programme of the last two civil disobedience movements — particularly of the last one—was economic boycott. This is a programme which in its very nature can be carried out best by the bourgeoisie itself. But, owing to its precarious position, the Indian bourgeoisie was unable to take it up. On the other hand, thousands of those, who had entered into an alliance, even though unconscious, with it to fight for a bourgeois *swaraj*, had to court imprisonment by picketing its doors. Such a situation is not conducive to confidence in the bourgeoisie. The latter cannot be justified in asking others to fight a battle, none of the risks of which it is prepared to take, and of the spoils of which it claims an undivided share. Had the bourgeoisie courageously declared a telling and spectacular boycott of British interests during the last movement, it would still have commanded, in spite of us socialists, the confidence of the national forces; and the fears of disunity which are haunting so many minds would not have arisen at all. The failure of the Indian bourgeoisie to play a revolutionary role has struck the first blow to national unity, i. e., to the united front of the masses and the bourgeoisie.

I do not suggest that the average Congress worker

has thought out the whole question in this manner. But he has certainly been severely disillusioned and made to wonder if a change of front had not become necessary.

The Indian bourgeoisie has proved un-revolutionary, i.e., failed to develop a vigorous anti-imperialist movement under its leadership, not only because it failed to participate in the struggle. For such a movement to develop, it is also necessary that the masses are drawn into it in large numbers, that is, it must be made a mass movement. This too the bourgeoisie has failed to do. A mass movement under bourgeois leadership is not a unique thing. It has unfortunately been a frequent historical occurrence It is not possible, however, to create a mass movement in India under present conditions merely on the strength of appeals to national sentiment and acts of social service. In a country like modern Germany or Great Britain, where bourgeois rule has elevated national sentiment to holy heights, an appeal to it can do miracles. But in India where such sentiments have never prevailed and are not found in the masses (on account of there never having been a bourgeois order here), it has little appeal or other utility. It may arouse, as it has done, educated young men, but the latter alone cannot make a revolution.

Social service, likewise, falls flat. At best, its approach is individual and only very indirectly political. It therefore takes long to produce political results even in individuals. I know Congress workers, who love "solid" work, attach a great deal of importance to social

service activity—in the shape of medical relief, educational work, *harijan* and *khadi* work, etc. This may appear to be solid work when there is no other programme, but it is an extremely ineffective programme for drawing out the masses in their millions into the political arena. The hypothesis behind such an approach is that, if a sufficiently large number of individuals are converted, a revolution would be created. Converted individuals are required; but only for the cadre of revolutionary workers. Revolution itself requires participation of classes, moved by class motives, hopes and fears. Has the Indian bourgeoisie a programme so to move the masses ?

How has the bourgeoisie brought the masses under their banner elsewhere ? Firstly, by inspiring confidence in itself by entering the thick of the fight. (I have already dealt with this point.) Secondly, by placing alluring slogans and programmes before the masses, which, while not touching its own interests, appear sufficiently attractive to the latter. Thirdly, by its ability and willingness to finance the whole movement.

The Indian bourgeoisie has failed to place any attractive programme before the masses. To attract, it must show that it has more to give than imperialism. But its economic position does not make it possible for it to do so. Under world capitalist conditions, if the Indian bourgeoisie has to prosper, it must do so only by intense exploitation of the Indian masses—by paying as low and selling as dear as possible. As far as the industrial workers are concerned, it has absolutely nothing to offer.

Even in the sphere of agriculture, it cannot afford to follow a progressive policy. It must get its raw materials cheap. Today, in Bihar and the U. P., there is an open war between the newly opened Indian sugar mills and the cane-cultivators. And, ironically enough, the Provincial Governments have become the arbitrators. Such a situation cannot conduce to the growth of a bond of community of interest. even though only as against the foreign power, between the masses and the bourgeoisie. One wonders if in such a situation the talk of unity does not appear ridiculous to those who indulge in it.

The bourgeoisie would like to give the peasantry some relief in the matter of rent and taxation. But here too, its relationship with the landed interests, on the one hand, and its reluctance to take recourse to direct action against imperialism, on the other, prevents it from going beyond half-hearted promises. These promises naturally are not convincing. Firstly, they do not go far enough; secondly, they do not touch the majority of the Indian peasants who have uneconomic holdings and therefore cannot bear any taxation; thirdly, the present share of the bourgeoisie in the exploitation of the peasantry, to which I drew attention above, gives rise to grave suspicions. Unity requires mutual trust, and it would be too platonic to insist that it must be based on future intentions rather than on present conduct.

As for the third, the bourgeoisie, because of the limitations and inhibitions I have described above, has followed an ungenerous and step-motherly policy. A

revolutionary bourgeoisie would have flooded the national movement with its money. It has not been the case in India. Take even such an innocuous programme of the national movement as *swadeshi*. Any one would have thought that here was a programme after the bourgeoisie's own heart. A really "national" bourgeoisie would have made the country ring with the cry of *swadeshi*. Tons of money would have been poured into *swadeshi* propaganda. But whereas the British bourgeoisie, in spite of its immense reserves, has been carrying on a vigorous "Buy British" propaganda in its own country, the Indian capitalists have left it to sentimental young men to sing the praises of *swadeshi*.

This twofold limitation of the Indian bourgeoisie—its inability to join the anti-imperialist movement and its failure to attract the masses under its banner, that is, with slogans that do not strike at its foundations—means that unity with it in the anti-imperialist struggle can end only in limiting, checking and thwarting the struggle itself. If the masses are not attracted to it and the bourgeoisie cannot participate in it, can it be otherwise ? This means that the point of view with which we started, namely, that it would be in the interest of the masses themselves to put behind their final class interests and join the bourgeoisie in fighting a common enemy, does not hold good. The policy is proved to be wholly ineffective, leading only to compromises with imperialism. It should be realised further that these compromises can only be at the cost of the masses, because they will always mean agreement between imperialism

and the native bourgeoisie as to the manner of exploiting the masses and resources of the country. It would be too naive to believe that a compromise between the upper classes of India and imperialism can have any other objective. This means that the acceptance of the above point of view, means not only frustration of the national movement, in so far as it means complete independence, but also a tragic betrayal of the masses. The betrayal becomes more tragic when one considers that the compromises with imperialism are made possible by the pressure of the masses themselves

The new Constitution that has been "granted" to India, beautifully brings out this argument. That Constitution represents, as it has been pointed out so often, just such a compromise between imperialism and the upper classes of India for the further exploitation of its masses. And, as it is already history, the Constitution was made possible by the pressure of the latter themselves.

A New Front

I have tried to show above that there is no such thing as national unity against the foreign "incubus". Those who talk of such unity mean thereby that the masses should fight imperialism in order to secure political and economic power for the upper classes. Such a policy in actual practice, because of the counter-revolutionary character of the upper classes, results in frustration of the independence movement and betrayal of the masses.

The question then is: how can the independence

movement be developed? For the satisfaction of those who say that they would have independence first and then think of the nature of *swaraj*, let us consider this question without any reference to the interests of the masses. I shall show later that this attitude is essentially wrong and self-delusive. No politics can be above class interests. However, for the moment, let us consider the question of independence from a "detached" point of view, thinking of the masses and the other classes as pawns in the game.

I have shown above that of the various classes in the country, only the masses, in which term I include workers, peasants and the lower middle classes, can fight imperialism, because they are not dependent upon it. Not only are they in a position to fight, but it is they alone who stand for a hundred per cent independence from imperialism. The very life-blood of the latter comes from the exploitation of the former. Imperialism may throw crumbs to the masses to allay their rising discontent, but it would be defeating its very purpose and denying its very inner nature, if it forswore that exploitation. With the other classes in the country it can come to terms by agreements and concessions, but it will sign its death warrant if it agreed to stop the exploitation of the masses, carried on either directly or indirectly through its native agents. This means, as I have already said, that the masses are the only classes in India which are uncompromisingly anti-imperialist. They alone stand for the complete independence of the country. Others either openly ridicule and oppose the idea or only pay lip-service to it. Those classes which flourish under the foreign "incubus", like

the highly paid government servants, the titled gentry, the big landlords, "the middlemen" of imperialism, are opposed to the country's independence Those who find the incubus a serious obstacle to their progress but are not in a position to fight it, like the Indian industrialists, would be satisfied with facilities to exploit the masses as junior partners of imperialism, particularly when the independence struggle threatens to awaken the class consciousness of the former.

So if we agree that the masses only are anti-imperialists and the others are counter-revolutionary, what should be our tactics — even as movers of pawns on the chess-board ? Obviously, we should adopt such tactics as would succeed in bringing the masses in opposition to imperialism. How can we do it. ?

Let us reflect on the pathetic fact that the population of the country is over thirtyfive crores and our foreign rulers number a bare two lakhs. How is such a monstrous mathematical proportion maintained ? Some one has remarked that even if the thirtyfive crores were sheep, it would have taken more than two lakhs of men to tend them and keep them under control ! Is this monstrosity possible because we are not nationally conscious ? We are not united ? We are not educated ? What are the foundations of British rule in India ?

Years ago I was listening to a speech of an eloquent Indian publicist in the beautiful city of San Francisco. The speaker's presence was as pleasant as his diction. He undoubtedly made a great impression on the audience. At

the end of the speech when the last echoes of hearty applause were yet ringing, up rose a small figure from the centre of the hall to ask the speaker a question: "How is it, Sir, that a handful of Britishers hold down 300 millions of Indians"? That simple question seemed suddenly to break the whole spell that the speaker had woven in his two hours' oration. The latter, however, rose with what seemed to me to be an exaggerated air of confidence and replied; "If you gave me just a couple of pistols, I could hold up this entire audience." What he meant, of course, was that a handful of armed men—armed with the most modern weapons of destruction—could easily keep in subjection millions of unarmed people. I am unable to say what impression that answer created on the audience. The latter was made up mostly of the Irish, who naturally did not ask for much logic where the British were concerned. For myself the question and its answer completely destroyed the effect of that undoubtedly beautiful speech. Fourteen years later, British arms seem to me even less the reason of our subjection.

No, we are a subject nation not because we are unarmed. No arms could have enabled two lakhs of men to keep in subjection thirtyfive crores of people. Nor is it our disunity—the multiplicity of races, tongues, and creeds—that is the cause of our slavery. Nor is it racial inferiority or any such thing. We must look elsewhere for the foundations of foreign rule.

To do that, we shall have to take a look at certain aspects of social organization and dynamics. Since

exploitation became possible in society (because labour began to produce more than what was required to recreate it*) it became divided into classes. The division invariably followed a uniform pattern—the dichotomy of society into the exploiting and exploited classes. There were intermediary classes, no doubt, but this dichotomy was always the predominant feature of the social organization. The resultant of this dichotomy was that every class-society was organized around the interests of the ruling class. Its laws, its ideals, its entire civilization were centred round those interests. It should not be understood that such a society was, or is, in a state of stable equilibrium. The exploiting and exploited interests are, as a matter of fact, ever at war—sometimes open, sometimes latent. But we are not immediately concerned with this inner conflict. Let us see what happens when such a society is threatened by an outside force.

It is clear that that force will immediately come into conflict with the ruling class. The superior of the two — and here I am not excluding the personal abilities of the leaders on both sides — will win.

What will be the position of the other classes in this conflict ? The intermediary classes will stand by the ruling class because their existence largely depends upon the social organization that it upholds. Of the exploited classes, those will stand by it whose loyalty it has been able to secure with money or the influence of psychological factors created by the prevailing

* See Chapter I for a fuller explanation.

culture. Another incentive for these classes to support the ruling class, may be the fear of the foreigner and the changes that may come with him. At the same time, it is also possible that where the ruling class is too oppressive and the foreigner is expected to be an improvement, the latter may even be welcomed by the exploited classes.

However, the important thing to bear in mind is that the opposition to the foreigner is always led by the class which happens to be at the head of society. And once this class is humbled and the possibility of any opposition even from the remnants of its ruins, has been removed, the other classes lose all chance of expressing their discontent, except sporadically. Till a new class comes into existence with such a position in society as to replace the foreign power, as the ruling power, the discontent of the masses must only end in dissipation.

Let us apply these principles to the Indian situation. When the foreign power appeared on the scene, India was organized on a feudal basis. Naturally the feudal lords opposed it. One by one they were crushed. The masses as a whole do not seem to have taken much interest in this warfare. The frequent dynastic changes, the territorial shiftings, the exhaustion of frequent wars, had probably snapped what psychological bonds might have existed between the feudal chiefs and their subjects.

As the foreign power established itself, the masses began to realise what had happened. Peasants, craftsmen, merchants found themselves ground down with an

unaccustomed ferocity. But, with their rajas and nabobs crushed, they were helpless. The foreign power no doubt had to face spasmodic uprisings, but it had no fear of organized challenge to its rule, as long as the remnants of the feudal order were kept in control. This is what actually happened.

From the beginning of its career, imperialism was conscious of its slender foundation and was anxious to broaden them. It was impossible for it to colonise here. Nor could it order from "home" an adequate army of occupation. It must build its foundations on native soil, with native materials.

At the beginning, it had to destroy certain interests, in order to establish its own. But after that was done, it had no desire to carry on wanton destruction. In fact it required an ordered and peaceful regime for the new type of imperial exploitation that it represented. So it established law and order, creating thereby an illusion regarding its real intentions. But this was only a part of its policy of stabilization, and is of no particular moment to us just now.

Along with its policy of peaceful government, it set out to create a sort of an inner buffer State between itself and the masses. The cities, which were the seats of feudal power, were in its hands, and it was more or less sure of itself in them. It was the country, the villages, where it needed to lay its foundations. And there it created its most valuable buffer State. Picking up those

elements of the upper classes of feudal India which had betrayed their side during its wars of conquest, it created a class of landlords to whom it handed over the millions of the peasantry.

That master-stroke of policy accomplished various results. It provided imperialism with an influential and absolutely reliable ally. It also largely assured the loyalty of the peasantry. The economic position and previleges of the landlords gave them tremendous prestige in the countryside. So their expression of loyalty towards the imperial power naturally found reflection in the vast peasantry. The *sarkar bahadur* came to be respected and feared. Finally, that policy created a shock-absorber between the peasants and imperialism. The discontent of the latter, whenever it came to the surface, turned not so much against the *sarkar bahadur* as against the landlords. Thus landlordism was the first and broadest foundation of British rule in India.

As imperialism progressed, it created other hangers-on — middlemen to do its business, retainers, servants, titled gentry, and so on. These groups and classes formed the upper strata of society and exercised considerable influence over the people in their own spheres. They thus formed a further safeguard for imperialism. In brief, imperialism broadened its basis by creating hangers-on, who formed the upper strata of society. Its rule, thus, was not based on arms but an alliance of class interests. Imperialism did not give rewards to its hangers-on out of its own pockets. They too drew their

profits, rents and tributes from the masses, just as imperialism did. It was this illicit understanding to exploit in common, the real producers of the country and its resources, that has been the main bulwark of British rule in the country.

While on the one hand there is this understanding, on the other, there is complete confusion and lack of consciousness. The creation of buffer classes has checked the growth of anti-imperialist feeling in the masses. On the one hand, they have been taught to regard landlords and capitalists as their own kith and kin against whom they should not show any temper; on the other, they find that it is these kith and kin largely who are their immediate exploiters. It is naturally difficult for them to generate feelings of hostility against imperialism, the exploitation of which they do not experience directly, or do so only as one of various other exploitations from which they suffer; and, at the same time, preserve a feeling of friendship and identity of interest with their so-called kith and kin who exploit them no less. Any appeal to the masses to fight imperialism on grounds of exploitation, is bound to leave them unmoved if it makes no reference to those who share — and more immediately — in that exploitation. A consciousness of antagonism towards imperialism cannot grow and leave the latter out of its purview, because the basis of antagonism towards both is the same — realization of the injury done. Those who wish to develop an anti-imperialist consciousness among the masses, must make up their minds about the native system of exploitation —

the junior imperialism. They will fail in their purpose, as they have done so far, if they advocate the retention of the latter and the elimination of the former. An anti-imperialist programme for the masses must be based on the slogan of elimination of all exploiters. I had said above that since the masses (peasants, workers and the lower middle class) were the only anti-imperialist elements in the country, our tactics obviously should be to bring them into conflict with imperialism; and I had asked how could that be done. Here is the answer. Freedom from exploitation must be placed in the forefront. Their immediate economic exploitation must be kept before them in its true perspective, as a part of the working of imperialism. They must be helped to develop a vigorous struggle against this exploitation; and the larger struggle against imperialism must be made to grow out of it as a logical consequence. If the fight against imperialism is to mean a fight against exploitation, it must begin at the nearest front. This is the new front to which we must move — the economic front of the masses. How will this front be developed? Who will be its leaders? What will be its programme?

THE NEXT PHASE

The first requirement for the development of this front is the building up of class organizations of the masses, particularly of peasant and labour unions. These unions will organize their struggle against oppression and exploitation; and through that struggle develop in them that anti-imperialist consciousness and solidarity which

will lead them finally to defeat imperialism. It is only in this manner that the masses will be brought collectively (and not individually) into conflict with imperialism.

It should be noted, however, that the process envisaged above would not materialize if the class organizations of the masses aimed merely at wringing concessions from the exploiting classes. They must aim not at adjustment with exploitation and oppression, but at complete freedom from them. In other words, they must be revolutionary and not reformist in character. They must aim at development of class consciousness and must be uncompromizing organs of class struggle.

This is the "solid" work before us. We must break the spell of national unity; and in the interest of national independence build up these organizations. Looking at the vastness of the country and the numbers of the masses, one would be justified in thinking that this work is solid enough for the most inveterate lover of solid work. It is true that it may not appeal to those who want to do "constructive" work. It is not a constructive programme. I have often been faced with the demand to produce a socialist constructive programme and been advised to demonstrate Socialism on a small scale before glibly talking of class struggle The constructive programme of Socialism—and its immense reality can be seen by turning to Russia—can begin only after the revolution. Till then our programme consists in constructing one thing—the struggle of the masses. It must

therefore be left to the Congress worker to decide if he would prefer to construct Khadi and A. I. V. I. A. centres or the fighting organizations of the masses which I have described above.

I have mentioned peasant and labour unions as the most important of these organizations. Of these two, labour organizations have been in existence for a considerable period of time and have been knit together in an all-India body — the All-India Trades Union Congress. To develop the T. U. C. is one of our urgent tasks.

Peasants' unions have had a rather checkered career. However, they are rapidly developing now all over the country. Their development must be stimulated and integrated. In a peasant country, this is naturally our most important task.

Alongside of these class organizations of the masses, there must also be developed a common political organization for them to carry on the anti-imperialist struggle. The class organizations will enable the workers, peasants, etc., to develop their economic and political struggle separately. We need an organization to integrate their struggle. The former are essential; without them the masses will neither be organized nor made conscious. It is on the basis of their class interests that they will first unite. But that will not be enough. They must combine together in one organization to secure their common ends —economic and political freedom.

Is not the Congress such a common organization?—it may be asked. Yes and no. The Congress certainly is not such an organization, as it is at present. Neither its constitution nor its programme answers the requirements of such an organization. Firstly, it claims to be a national body representing all classes in the country—the bourgeoisie as much as the worker, the landlord as much as the tenant. I have already shown what such a united front means. Where the upper and lower classes are united in one organization, the latter unquestionably stands primarily for the interests of the former. It is deliberate deception or tragic self-delusion to say that the interests of both can be equally represented within the same organization.

So the first thing the Congress must do to become an organization of the masses, is to declare that it does not represent the bourgeoisie; and that it stands as much against them as against imperialism People believe that that would destroy the "national" character of the Congress. What it would really do, however, is to convert it from a bourgeoisie body into a mass organization. It will mean a sudden leap for the Congress though a fall from its present respectability.

The Congress constitution does not give the Congress Committees any representative character, apart from that of representing individuals, "enrolled" Congressmen by the members of those very committees. This is too artificial a basis for the Congress to be a mass organization. In order that it may become so, it ought to be

constituted of representatives of mass organizations. In other words, it should be given a sort of a soviet constitution from the *bottom* upwards. A District Congress Committee ought to represent the peasant unions, the labour unions and other functional organizations of the anti-imperialist classes in that district. The higher bodies may be indirectly elected or through a combined direct and indirect method. In the transitional period from the present to this constitution, the prevailing practice of individual membership may be retained in combination with the suggested form.

Finally, the present programme of the Congress and its declarations of objectives, do not give it the character of a representative of the masses. Its objective must include, as a minimum, the following points:

1. Complete independence, in the sense of separation from British Imperialism.
2. All political and economic power to the producing masses (including brain workers).
3. Nationalization of all key and large industries, banks, mines, plantations, etc.
4. Abolition of landlordism in all its forms.
5. Land to the tiller of the soil.
6. Liquidation of all debts owed by peasants and workers.

Its programme of work must chiefly consist in the development, through its members, of the class organizations of the masses.

These are the three irreducible minima which the Congress must adopt or follow in order to become a proper anti-imperialist body. Till then it is not such a body.

But I said "Yes and no" to the question above. "Yes" in the sense that while the Congress in its organized form (i. e., taking its constitution and programme in consideration) is not such a body, it contains largely petty bourgeois (including peasant) elements which objectively are anti-imperialist. These elements have to be made conscious in order to become active anti-imperialists.

These changes which I have indicated as necessary before the Congress becomes an anti-imperialist body, are so basic that they do not involve merely a conversion but a disruption also. The anti-imperialist elements must be converted, but it is impossible to convert the bourgeois elements. Even of the former many will continue to cling to the bourgeois programme, if for no other reason, at least, for the sake of preserving "national unity." Therefore, a break with the bourgeois wing, together with its adherents, would be necessary. And the break while it should not be premature, should not be delayed either.

The formation of the Congress Socialist Party shows that a considerable portion of the petty bourgeois elements in the Congress has broken away from the bourgeois ideology. The Party has been criticised for not breaking away from the Congress. On that ground it has been dubbed fascist by certain people. The argument

advanced is that by remaining within the Congress, it is strengthening the bourgeois hold over the anti-imperialist elements within the Congress. Nothing can be further removed from reality, however. The very purpose of the Party remaining in the Congress is to weaken by inside propaganda and opposition, that hold; and ripen the anti-imperialist elements for a final break with it. The Party's going out would have meant isolation of the most conscious elements in the Congress from the rank and file; and consequently its continued attachment to the bourgeois programme. This is so obvious that it is strange to find it being questioned. Those who, remaining outside, talk of the Congress rank and file and the anti-imperialist movement, are shirking their responsibility. However it was a pleasure to learn of the remarks made by Mr. R. Palme Dutt at the last Congress of the Communist International. He admitted his mistake in characterizing the Congress Socialist Party as a fascist party and sounded a warning against such facile characterizations. One hopes that this is the beginning of a more correct appreciation of the needs of the situation.

There is only one question remaining to be considered in connection with the anti-imperialist movement. Who will be its leaders ? We have seen that there was a stage of feudal leadership. Then came the phase of the national reformist movement under bourgeois leadership. What will be the nature of the future leadership ? If the objective of the anti-imperialist movement is complete freedom from exploitation, then it is clear that the class

which at the present stage of development of the means of production, can be the centre of an exploitation-less society, must lead. Exploitation at this stage can be removed only by the social ownership of means of production. The class which most consciously can put forward the demand for such ownership, is the working class. The fact that it already produces socially, naturally impels it to make that demand; and it not only makes that demand, but in the construction of the new society, it is going to play the central role. Thus the destiny which the masses have to reach, is most consciously envisaged and strived for by the working class. Therefore it alone must assume the leadership. Its leadership will largely operate through the ideological influence that it will exert on the development of the anti-imperialist movement.

Before concluding, I wish to touch on the attitude of political workers (briefly referred to before) of looking upon themselves as above classes and upon the classes as pawns in the political game which they move. The reality is just the reverse of this. Political workers are not individuals. In spite of slight differences of opinion, such workers can be grouped together in parties. Each one of us thinks that he has formed his opinions independently. Obviously there is something beyond and above individuals that moulds their opinions. This something is social classes. Political workers if classified, will fall into parties; and these will be found to coincide with class or group interests. The seventy-two gentlemen who founded the Congress in 1885 were of one mind. Why ?

Because they represented more or less identical interests which were finding expression though them.

This is one of the most difficult concepts to drive into people's minds. Every one has his ego, which refuses to admit outside dictation of his views. It is a fact, nevertheless.

We have all been taught to understand political and social movements in terms of personalities. We seldom, if ever, look behind individuals—to those forces of society which push and jog us on, which shape political programmes for us and give us philosophies and religions. Individuals count—some count a great deal—but only as the agents of those forces, as their executors. They are not exactly mannekins; they are themselves parts of those forces, and shape them in their turn.

But no individual, however brilliant, can create a social movement unless the conditions in that society are appropriate for it; in reality, he hardly "creates" it even then. His individuality undoubtedly contributes to its success or failure, but its character and its ideals can be only those prescribed by the existing social conditions. The essence of leadership lies in interpreting those conditions correctly so as to fulfill the process which they have set up. Leadership is essential, but only that leadership succeeds which fulfills the laws of society.

It is for this reason that in the analysis that I have made above of the national movement, the foundations of imperialism, etc., I have talked only in term of classes

and not individuals. Those Congress workers who think that they are taking a detached view of political movements, are falling victim to one of the gravest distortions of bourgeois social science A "detached" view is not possible in politics, because we do not live in a vacuum, nor are politics brewed in it.

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